THE WHAT-SHALL-I-DO GIRL

BY

ISABEL-WOODMAN-WAITT

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The What-Shall-I-Do Girl

"WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MYSELF?"

(*See page 2*)

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BY

ISABEL WOODMAN WAITT

Illustrated by
JESSIE GILLESPIE

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TO

MY VALUED FRIEND

Nathaniel C. Fowler, Jr.

A WORD

America is full of young girls, fresh from the public schools, who are neither rich enough nor poor enough to know where to turn for helpful guidance toward the goal of their best efforts. Inexperienced, timid, lacking the initiative necessary to cope with the work-a-day world, they stand hesitating on the threshold of their own inefficiency.

May such a one receive some wee helpful suggestion from "The What-Shall-I-Do Girl," and say to her inmost self:

"I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive, — what time, what circuit first,
I ask not; but unless God send His hail
Or blinding fire-balls, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In His good time."

Browning.

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The What-Shall-I-Do Girl

JOY DISCOVERS SOMETHING ON HER MIND

25 Linden Road, Maywood, Mass.
New Year's Day.

YOU DEAR GIRL:

Don't let the shock of hearing from me alarm you. It's a New Year's resolution, or a part of one.

Every year since I can remember father and I have drawn our chairs close to the open fire in the library and made our resolutions for the new year as we watched the old fade into the past.

Last night the fire was unusually fascinating. Outside the wintry wind shrilled dismally through the lindens. Inside the flames danced merrily. Father's great arm-chair was in its usual place, but I kept the tryst alone.

He will never watch with me again. I realized it fully for the first time, sitting there thinking, thinking, thinking, all alone.

There was a troublesome problem on my mind, and this was the first opportunity I had had really and seriously to consider it. It was myself. What should I do with myself? What could I do with myself? There was no one in the world

to take care of me now but myself. How could I best make me take charge of myself? In other words, how could I find myself?

I must try to be happy. Father would wish that. I must be useful, and I must be self-supporting right away. Even my childhood home would have to go to the creditors and there would be nothing left. Dear father had always been so lavish. Like many others, we had lived up to the last cent of his income, without considering that that income might sometime suddenly stop. It's dreadful what a protracted illness will do to one's savings, especially when one hasn't been very regular about them.

I must go to work at once. But how? What position was I able to fill? I wasn't trained in a single way to earn my daily bread. It came home to me like a blow,

this realization that commercially I was absolutely good for nothing!

I would become efficient, in time, of course. I was young and as strong as the average American girl. My schooling was from the public schools and my bringing-up had been refined and wholesome. Still, I was totally unfitted for any sort of usefulness, and, further, if I had been called upon to choose my life-work last night, I wouldn't have had the slightest idea of what I should have liked to do! I had never thought it all out before, for there was always father.

For hours I surveyed myself suspended in the future and wondered what would become of me. If I only had some one to go to for advice, some one who really could tell me what to do and how to do it.

There were distant relatives, but I

couldn't be an incubus. Nor a sponge, either, on my friends.

What did other girls do? Ah, I had struck the key note! What did you, and the rest of my class who are out in the world making their own way, do when you started?

Then the thought rushed in upon me all at once. I would organize you girls into a sort of vocational bureau for my own benefit. I would write to each of you, you who know me best, you who have bravely fought for your places in the business world. You could tell me, if any one could. That was my resolution, and this is what I am asking each of you:

Why did you select your especial line of work? Do you like it? Would you choose it over again, if you were beginning anew? How did you start out? Where were you trained? Did it cost

much? How long before you really began to earn money? (I must begin right now, some way or other.) What are some of your happinesses and sorrows in connection with the daily toil? Do you know of anything I could do? And please answer all sorts of other similar questions which may pop into your heads. You are successful. You have made-good. Show me how you did it. I will grasp thankfully at any advice.

If millions of other women can find employment in the United States, why can't I? I can and I will, with the help of you dear girls.

Of course, I know I haven't any real talent for music, but I love it better than anything else in the world. I can reach the A-flat in " Bonnie Sweet Bessie " without any trouble at all. Do you suppose I could get a living by singing in a city

choir, or by taking a second part, to begin with, in some opera company? I know the scores of "Faust" and "The Bohemian Girl," already. Please tell me frankly. You've all heard me sing at church.

I long to get to work. It will help me forget about father. Don't mention him, when you write. I couldn't bear it. I'll know what you want to say, and it'll be easier for us both.

It must be a glorious feeling to know that you're supporting yourself and have your own little place in the busy life around you. Just think of being wholly independent! I shall love it. Already, I have spent my first pay envelope fifty times!

You can't understand what it means to me to be going away — way out into the wonderful, beautiful world. Where? I

don't know, and that's the most exciting part of it. I have never known any other world than here with father. It seems so vast, and I feel so little and lone and almost afraid. Tell me about it, you who have been there.

This is your penance for being my friend.

Some day I shall owe my success — for I'm going to be a success, you know — to you and the others who have given me courage to tread the trackless way of the untrained. Perhaps, then, I can in some measure repay the kindness.

Until that happy time, accept the sincere gratitude of a " wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie " on her way to the wonderful world.

Joy Kent.

P. S. I wasn't alone the very first part of last evening. Tad Sears, who, you re-

member, was in our class at Maywood high school and graduated from Harvard last year, is home over the holidays and ran in for a few minutes. You can guess what he said; but, of course, I wouldn't! He just pitied me — said I ought not to live alone. Just as if he had appointed himself a committee of one to look after the homeless! I'll show him! I won't be a charity wife. How pity hurts! The world is my home. Help me to find it.

Joy.

ANNE HAS LETTERS IN HER BLOOD

Times Office,
Three-quarters to Midnight.

JOY DEAR:

Just back from a stupid concert that was only worth a stick and a half, and there are still two hours before the last car home.

Could you peek into my parlor — this

great "city room" — I wonder if you'd think bedlam had broken loose. It used to confuse me at first — the click of the telegraphs, the whirr of numberless typewriters, the incessant ring of telephones from most unexpected corners, the reporters rushing in and out with their stories, the night editor shouting orders, and every one doing things all around me at once. But now that I'm accustomed to it, I not only don't mind it, but find I can't write half so well anywhere else. The atmosphere of a newspaper office is like tonic, while just to see the tired boys getting up their copy is an inspiration. I once heard a very wealthy man, who began his career as a country printer, (though, I bet, he didn't get rich that way), say: "Every time a whiff of printer's ink reaches my nostrils it makes me crazy to get back into my little coun-

try pressroom." It's the same with the roar of the night force — it captivates.

What I felt when I read your letter while trolleying to my assignment this afternoon simply beggars description, as a "cub" might say. (He wouldn't say it but once, however, or he'd lose his job!)

Go to it, Joy dear, and may all success be yours.

"Out in the world" you say you long to go — writing as though it were some place apart. You are out in the world already, childie, as much as you will ever be, and probably more. The world isn't any one particular place more than another — it's just where you happen to be, that is, your world.

My world is this newspaper. My father is the man who gives me my assignments — we call him the city editor. The boys

are my brothers. I'm wedded to my typewriter, and my stories are my children.

You must find your world — the world you will love — and get into it just as fast as you can.

I will show you a glimpse of mine, which may and may not tempt you.

There is a period in the life of almost every girl when she thinks she would like to write, just the same as the stage craze strikes her as soon as she has taken part in some amateur theatricals in the town hall. Luckily for themselves and others, most girls outgrow this vanity, some by waiting for their inspiring genius to turn up and inspire, others by the cruel realization that their literary attempts at high-brow fiction are not appreciated by the manuscript readers. Soon they tire, become discouraged, and fall into their natu-

ral channels of life, which is a blessing to all.

But if you've letters in your blood, ah, then there is no averting it! You have to fight, get knocked down, pick yourself out of the mire, drive your fingernails into your flesh, grit your teeth and go at it again. Fighting for recognition you are. And there's no failure strong enough to keep you eternally out of the game.

A managing editor, who has exploited the "newspaper bugs" of too-many-to-be-counted women novices, told me that only one in two hundred stuck to the business, and he was conservative at that. Not so very promising, is it?

For me a newspaper always held allurements. Nor can I remember when I did not peruse it daily from one end to the other. I used to wonder how on earth it got hold of all the news, and questioned

every one I knew who came in contact with the work. It was so gratifying to find out that a woman's wit had some place in a newspaper besides the "advice to the lovelorn," "two trebles in space, four over group, chain five, skip three," and fashion stuff.

Eager for information, I sought advice from a real, live newspaper woman with a remarkably successful record. She listened a moment to my childish ambitions, and then, with tears in her eyes, begged me not to enter journalism. "Go back to your school," cried she. (I was teaching at the time.) "You never could endure the rebuffs, the heartaches when you 'fall down,' the terrible hours in all kinds of weather — think of tramping in the dark in questionable parts of a strange city, perhaps with wet feet and soggy clothes, after something you couldn't possibly get,

and then marching in with your failure either to get called down or fired! Then the life — the temptations — how do you know you would be infallible? It coarsens a woman, and so many resort to cigarettes and drinking — yes, I am going to give it to you straight — to keep their poor racked nerves from being completely shattered. Oh, it fairly makes me sick to think of some of the things I've seen," and she closed her eyes as if to shut out the horrible recollections.

But she didn't phase me.

Later, when I was looking for a job, two different city editors looked me over and said kindly: " It's no place for a nice little girl like you."

My soul blazed with indignation. Other women were succeeding and were respected, too. Couldn't I do what they did, given the same determination and persist-

ency? The very attempt of everybody to hold me back spurred me on. Besides, I had to do it — it was in my blood.

Never will I discourage a would-be journalist the way others discouraged me.

If you are in earnest, and have a strong body, a strong mind, and strong morals, there is no reason why you shouldn't meet and conquer the various vicissitudes and temptations that arise. And they are various! Also, you must be resourceful and possess all kinds of tact.

Everything you write is called a "story." And to write a story requires the ability to get the gist of the news in a nutshell, and then tell it anti-climax, that is, beginning with the most important fact and ending with the least. This enables the reader to see at a glance what it's all about, and also makes it easy for the copy

desk to cut it down, if it's too long or space is scarce, by merely chopping off the bottom paragraphs without injuring the main story.

Then you must be able to see truth, and stick to the truth. Simple, concise, correct English is all that is necessary. If you have "style" you may or may not be lucky. And it might be wiser not to mention the fact when looking for a job.

A reporter is not supposed to be a rhetorician. Plain little sentences, presenting straight facts in a connected way, are what is wanted. Be as breezy and vivid as truth will permit, and when using local color, go shy on the yellow. Above all, be alive. Turn your brain into a sort of blank graphophone record, but retain the power of discrimination between what is and what is not news. And, say, if you want a thousand different answers to the

same question, ask a thousand different newspaper men what news is.

Besides all these, you need courage and some one to pat you on the back. A little praise often goes further than a raise — and some papers use this method of advancing their staffs!

Talk about "out in the world" — you will see the whole of it if you enter this business. In spite of the meagre pay, terrific hours, confining duty which never lets you make an appointment you can promise to keep, and the wear and tear on your mental and physical sympathies, if you do come into it you'll be happier than in any other kind of work — provided, of course, you come in for the same reason that I did.

Oh, the happiness and satisfaction of seeing your stories in print! And the day you begin to sign them your feet will not

tread on earth. Then, too, by true insight into human affairs you can often become a factor for good in the life of some poor soul facing public scandal. That is another difficult part to learn: how to be loyal to your paper and get the news, and, at the same time, loyal to your fellow man and better self.

Joy, if your city editor said to you: "A man has just jumped from a ten-story building around the corner. Go get a look at him," would you go? Or if there were a great conflagration that took half of the staff to cover, and you were told to stand in the police station and get a picture story of those nearly demented creatures who came tearing in to seek their lost children, scattered by the fire, many unable to speak the language and screaming and gesticulating in such anguish that they turned the place into a veritable madhouse every time

a new victim was brought in maimed and burned and dying — could you stay at your post among those broken families who had lost their all and keep your nerve? Could you question an ignorant young mother who was under suspicion for the death of her fatherless baby? Or could you watch the suffocating misery of the congested districts of a great city, when the mercury almost volatilizes in the thermometer and little children lie gasping on the sun-baked pavements for the air denied them in their stifling, foul tenements? They die, these babies, sometimes fifty in a single day!

And then, after being a part of such frightful conditions, could you go back to your typewriter and live them all over again in a must-be-ready-on-time, readable story?

Oh, you inexperienced girl who would

play the game, remember it isn't all interviewing statesmen, authors, actors, prominent men and women who arrive in your city; nor yet entertainments, concerts, art exhibits, lectures, or theatres — those are the humdrums. The human interest stuff lies in the shadow of the court, the jail, among the poor.

Of course, the society editor escapes all this. She has a perpetual round of twaddle — receptions, teas, weddings, and such endless, perfunctory monotony. But if you like social functions, here's a chance to witness a good many whose doors would otherwise be closed to you. When in Rome, you naturally have to dress as Romans do, or as nearly as your salary will allow you — but you must have clothes or you'll feel fearfully out of place. The patronizing glances of the dames of wealth aren't easy to bear. However, as

soon as they know that you represent such and such a paper, they'll fawn all over you. Do society? Never! I'd rather go back to teaching.

It isn't easy to get a job — that is, for a woman. There are all sorts of schools of journalism taught by mail advertised, but I would advise you to avoid them. The best school is to get a job and learn by hard knocks. Every time you get up after being knocked down, you've learned more than a whole course in any correspondence school. The colleges are getting journalism into their curriculums, which is splendid for those in college but doesn't help you any.

I can offer only two suggestions: One is to get out of your library the best book on writing for the press — the librarian will probably know which one is called for oftenest — and read it carefully so that

you'll get it into your head what such words as "story," "lead," "stick," "cover," and "box," mean; and, also, so you'll have some idea of the skeleton of the office force — the relative positions of the editor-in-chief, the managing editor, city editor, night editor, etc. Otherwise, you might make some bad blunders. For instance, in time of trouble you should always appeal to the man directly above you. He is your "boss." Don't commit the unpardonable offence of going over his head.

The second is about getting taken on. If you happen to apply when the city editor (and he is usually the one to see) is short-handed, you may be lucky enough to be given a tryout at once. Newspaper people are forever changing their jobs. Either they fall down and get fired, or they resign for the better or for no reason

at all except, maybe, pique. Anyway, there are frequent vacancies for which a standing army of down-and-outs is ready to rush at any moment.

Go to every city editor in a large city and leave your name and address, and the chances are that you will never be called though you put up a good pretence of having a nose for news and wait a thousand years. Addresses get lost in the city room — just like the clipping shears.

The best way to approach is with a little manuscript tucked under your arm. Hold it out tentatively as a possible story. He will glance at it and either bow you out politely, promising to look it over later, or, mirabile dictu, grab it and tell you how to rewrite it, newspaper style, which you must do unquestioningly, no matter how much better you think the original is.

You are not, as a rule, in a position to

get real live news first-hand. There remains the Sunday story — a feature, such as you read in the magazine sections of the big Sunday papers. See how some of these are written, and then if you know of any noted person, an author, lecturer, or missionary just home from abroad, whose tale has not appeared in the recent papers, lay for such and find out all the interesting things you can about his new book or trip or the heathen. Don't let it get stale; write it immediately, and trot after your job. (We don't say "position" in the newspaper game.)

You may make a hit. At any rate, if it's readable stuff you may get a chance to write on "space" and be in line for a place on the staff. Some writers prefer to "space" and make more money that way than on a regular stipend. Others don't earn their salt.

Once on, it's all up to you. You'll need to use your wits and keep both feet on the ground. When you come back to report a story to your city editor, try to tell him just who and what and when and where and why. Be brief. Be simple. Don't rigmarole. He has to listen to hundreds in a day. Be merciful and short. Or he won't stand it long.

I well remember my first assignment. It was to interview the greatest detective in America. (Afterwards I found out that the only reason they sent me was because I was the only available member of the staff, or they would never have sent a greenhorn.) Well, that detective had been stampeded by reporters from other papers all day. He was guarded by a retinue of questioning clerks whom I had to pass. Finally, without suspecting my business, they let me in. Scared almost to

death, I faced the big man who demanded in a polite, though brusque, hurry-up-I'm-busy tone what I wanted. Then my impertinence struck the vulnerable point in his pride as I ventured: "I should think you could tell, just to look at me, with your marvellous powers, Mr. Detective." He laughed and talked for an hour, and by a mere lucky thought I asked him a certain question. Back to the office I ran and recited my little speech breathlessly, as if the world depended upon it. "You'll do," cried my big chief, jumping out of his chair. "By George, she's got a scoop!" I didn't know what a "scoop" was, but decided it was the proper thing to get. Never will I forget that happy minute.

But scoops are scarce. Contrast that stumbled-upon good fortune with this, which is by far the more common. I was

told to get a story about a Mary Robinson, living somewhere in the city, street address unknown. I had long since learned not to bother my superior with "How shall I find her?" The directory gave six Mary Robinsons. The telephone book, one. Naturally I called the last first to save hunting up the others unnecessarily. Wrong, of course. The other five were scattered miles apart all over the city. I had disproven four and it was getting late, so I rang up the office. (A reporter always has to keep in touch with his office, lest something more important than the assignment he has turn up and he be needed.) "Nothin' doin'. Look 'em all up — it's a good story," were the terse instructions from the office. The heat of that day was intense, and even after dark it was insufferable. I had eaten nothing but bread and milk for a week on account

of the fear of heat prostration. I sought the two other Marys. Neither was right. I didn't have another clue. I had failed. "Get it?" yelled the city editor when he saw me come in. I shook my head. He didn't call me down. But his silence and his scowl and the realization that I had fallen down were enough. They had posted my detective story on the bulletin and patted me on the back, and yet I had not worked half so hard as in the hunt for the mysterious Mary. The only consolation was that no other paper succeeded in finding her either.

I am going into the details a bit more than I had planned.

But I mustn't forget the boys — they are so good to me and will be to you. A fine, manly set, and just like a lot of brothers, I've found newspaper men to be. They will sympathize, encourage, and

help you over many rough places they themselves have trod.

In newspaperdom you live every minute. Life never stagnates, and you get very close to humanity.

I'll have to race for my car. No, I'm not afraid to go home in the dark — it's a part of it, you know.

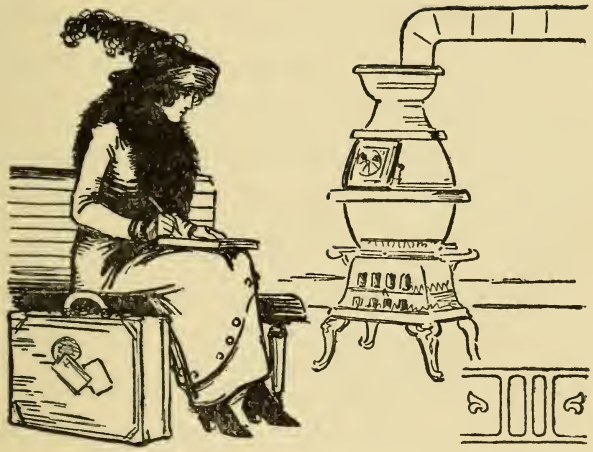
With sincere wishes that you may choose for your best happiness, I must love and leave you.

ANNETTE.

P. S. As I wrote "sincere wishes that you may choose for your best happiness" I felt like a hypocrite after giving you all this newspaper dope. It's a terrible game for a nice little girl like you, who never even heard of padding an expense account. Out of my heart I beg of you to go out into the world protected by that good man

who loves you. It's pretty weepy, playing Sob Sis, and the tears aren't all crocodile. Don't follow me — follow "Tad."

ANNE.



GEORGIE SAYS ANY LITTLE HOME BEATS THE ROAD ALL HOLLER

On the Road, Between Trains.

DEAR "BEASTIE:"

If there is anything on the face of the earth more exasperating than to watch the last car of the train you've raced your legs off to catch glide gracefully out of reach, while you stand gasping, hat and

veil awry, wildly gesticulating with handbag and umbrella, with the sickening sensation that you'll have to kill four hours before you can escape from the town you've just cleaned up from one end to the other, I'd like to know what it is! (Breath, please.)

That's what has just happened to me.

I am beating my wings like a

> "Bird of the wilderness,
> Blithesome and cumberless,"

suddenly caught in a measly little station, with salt on its tail. And four whole hours before it can fly again!

You might put in the time by taking a brisk walk, but I, who walk most all day long every day, don't need the exercise, thank you. You might even enjoy the scenery, but it has lost all of its pristine beauty for those of us who are so innocu-

lated with it that we simply can't stand any more. Rolling farms, squatty villages, unkempt thoroughfares — they look alike, New England over.

The dinky little station-master has just shut up the dinky little ticket window, shut up the dinky little stove, beside which I am sitting, shut his teeth on his dinky little pipe and gone home to his dinky dinner. He wanted to shut up the station, too, as he informed me was his usual custom at noontime. I told him if I had to wait four hours on a railroad platform in January weather he'd lose his job, and he went off, jangling his keys, after first trying the ticket window from the outside and eyeing me the while with flagrant suspicion.

At last he and his mutterings are gone, as well as my train, the account of which may make you rather impatient. But re-

member it doesn't make you half so impatient as it does me! I am telling you about it purposely, for it is an everyday part of the business life I lead, and that was what you wanted to know about, wasn't it?

To digress a little, mother forwarded your New Year's letter to the address of my firm, who sent it on to me, as I shall not get back to the city for a week at least. Surely, this is a glorious opportunity to reply, if you'll be content with pencil marks until the ink thaws in my fountain pen.

Joy, old girl, don't you ever let the jimjams, the down-and-out, feel-like-thirty-cents, what is it they call it in polite society? — the indigoes — I mean the blues, knock out your beautiful optimistic spirit. Cheerfulness will do more for you than all the creeds and isms and even training in

the world. A happy smile is a real business-getter.

I know because I land the goods. That's how I lost that miserable train — smiling my way into a fat pocketbook, which gave me a new order.

You and I have kind of lost track of each other lately, and you don't know how truly delighted I was to find that you selected me, among your other best friends, to add my little say. Whether or not it will find favor in your eyes, I am grateful for the genuine acknowledgment of true friendship. I mean that, and now that it's all spieled off, let's get down to rock bottom.

You will be horrified to hear me name what you probably have already guessed I am — a book agent! Yes, I was horrified too, at first. It seemed so — well, so common.

I'm not ashamed of it any more, however, for don't I have all the glad rags I want? Isn't my little account in the home savings bank swelling pretty fast? And isn't there a fine position with the firm staring me in the face? Well, there is, and I'll tell you all about it a little later on. Isn't it splendid to have your record each week prove that you're a howling success? Besides, I've learned such a lot about people, the way to meet them and win them over. Joy, you wouldn't recognize the shy little 'fraid cat you once went to school with in the self-reliant, determined young person who just defied the station-master to lock her out. I've learned a lot of geography, too, about my native state, and have seen practically the whole of New England, which is my territory.

Somehow, I feel as if your eyes will

grow wide with scanning amazement when you have read thus far. Hence, my dear little innocent, let me pause right here long enough to assure you that I'm not a sport, in a sporty sense of that word. None of that for mine! Of course, I meet it everywhere, among all sorts of other travelling persons. Some of them are lonely and merely friendly; others lonely and more than friendly. I choose the merely friendly, when circumstances force lonely human beings together.

The fresh kind, the pick-ups — well, just to warn you, I'll confess that at first I felt flattered and thought it was expected of me to be rather nice and perhaps I was a bit indiscreet. I soon found out there's nothing in it. A girl can be on the road anywhere in America and be let alone, if she wishes to be let alone. Sometimes, though, she is called upon to demonstrate

the fact. The flirtations of the travelling world are beneath the notice of the girl who means business.

I do. I'm all business, and always shall be so long as I'm in business.

My firm deals mostly in rather expensive sets of encyclopedias. For the past eight months I have been demonstrating the indispensableness of a set of twenty-five volumes, which no home can afford to be without. I am familiar with every department in them and can talk them upside down. Really, I believe I should buy them for my own family, provided, of course, I had any. With this sublime faith in their true worth I can present them in a convincing way that gets a fair percentage of the country folk who live at a distance from libraries. The colored plates attract the children, while the easy payment plan loosens up the tight-wads.

From this town alone I've received five orders, which net me not a bad week's salary. Some weeks it's nearly double; others, half. The average is good, and the firm pays all my travelling expenses.

I've hustled this week, as the farms in this village are wide apart. Some days I see a lot of people, others only a few. The firm furnishes me with a list of names, you know. It depends partly on whether or not I can get over the doorsill, which is the most difficult end of the sale, and partly on the weather. Once, one delightful spring day, I heard a woman say: "Oh, dear, I wish I was a book agent so's I could get out and enjoy the weather." Wonder how she'd like this bitter January!

I prefer working in the country to being near the cities, not only because the

chances of good sales are better, but because the farmers' wives don't slam their doors in my face nearly so often as the suburban housemaids. Nor are there any formidable speaking tubes to be slid through. In fact, I am often invited in to display my wares, especially in rural sections where I have to drive and visitors are scarce.

When some one yaps out: "Naw, we don't want nothin'," from a slit in the door, which is hastily banged and audibly locked as if I were a marauder, the visit doesn't take many minutes. But, once inside, an interview sometimes requires hemming and hawing for a whole morning, while pa and ma and granny and all sizes of infants are consulted, including the live-stock, or, rather, the products therefrom, which must be turned into cash to pay the installments. My sales depend a lot upon

the price of butter, milk and eggs, and the plenitude thereof.

Good book agents are always in demand. My firm keeps a standing advertisement for them in several of the leading magazines and Sunday papers. The first Monday in every month a long line of expectant faces appears at the manager's door. Each girl is given a separate interview, and, if she shows any of the qualities which go to make up a good seller, she is given a tryout. You see we have to get many new agents, for there are countless failures, pitiful failures, girls without personality, quick intuition, tact, stick-to-itiveness, who never do anything else but fail. (You, Joy, could never become one of these if you tried. Your letter convinces me of that.)

Only a few are chosen, the trig, intelligent, adaptable ones, with the will to get-

there. A self-conscious, timid, unprepossessing little body may sell the stuff upon the counter when the buyer is there to demand it and select what he wants; but it takes an aggressive determination coupled with infinite ingenuity to trot your goods deliberately into a private home and force an unexpected, unpremeditated purchase. You ought to compare the sellers on the road with the stay-behind-the-counters to see just what a vast difference there is in the ability required really to make good.

The new position I spoke of, is to be in charge of hiring the help and starting them out. I would be an assistant to my present boss. He hinted at this once, and half promised the job to me, as the department is getting altogether too large for him to handle alone. Besides, he said that my experience would enable me to help select promising applicants, and my suc-

cess would encourage beginners to go and do likewise. When that glorious time comes, I'll be on Easy Street, with a fixed salary, and can live at Home Sweet Home.

The work is endless. In every city lots of firms are looking for energetic salespeople to represent them. Here, at least, each has an equal chance, for advancement depends upon the canvasser herself. Also her raise in salary or commissions can be brought about by her own exertions. My firm does not limit the number of commissions; one could sell a thousand sets of books if one were able in a week and reap the profits. Once, at Christmas time, I cleared a fabulous sum in ten days.

I had the choice of beginning at a small salary, nine dollars to be exact, or just commissions. Not knowing anything about the business, I chose the salary,

realizing that I'd soon be fired if I wasn't worth it, while it might be worth more to me in the meantime than commissions to the value of X. Soon I saw that I could do better on the other basis, so gave up my salary, which I have more than equalled, except during a few dull weeks.

Joy, no man on earth can kid the way my boss can. The first day on my job he handed me the "con" game until I thought book agenting was a regular cinch. Then an expert seller, smartly dressed and about fifty, took me in tow and showed me how. That woman sold four sets in one day, and I've been wondering ever since how she did it. The morning of the third day I sallied forth alone. Different? Well, some! I'll never forget how horribly it hurt to have the first door slammed in my face! I cried my heart out with mortification, and nearly slumped,

the way lots of other girls do at the first occurrence.

Luckily, I stuck to it and soon learned a method of approach which made the insult rare, for one can be a canvasser and still be a lady, and people are beginning to realize it. The women employed by our firm are all ladies, or they wouldn't be in service long. The books are high-grade, standard books, and the firm's reputation irreproachable, so why should I be other than proud of my vocation? A homely trade to the high-minded, perhaps, but a money-making one and vastly interesting and varied in its study of different towns and their inhabitants.

Joy, you aren't trained for any especial work. Why don't you try this? I believe you possess the inborn attributes and could easily acquire the rest. It's ready for you at any time, and it's not too hard

when once you're on. Then, too, best of all, it's out-of-door life. My lungs are entirely healed from being in the open air. That's why I took it up in the first place, you know, — my wretched health. Now I'm in it for keeps and on the road to prosperity.

The dinky little station-master has just opened up the dinky little ticket window and is again eyeing me suspiciously. Guess I'll leave him to his conjectures, as I do you to yours, while I brave the cold and beg for a bite at the first farm house. Then, it'll be train time again, unless I stub my toe and miss it.

If you want anything in my power to give, ask it of

Devotedly yours,

GEORGIE.

P. S. My pen has thawed at last. Excuse the stub.

P. P. S. I've grown rather slangy, I'm afraid. Excuse that, too.

P. P. P. S. Say, I remember Tad perfectly. Should think I might, seeing I was awfully stuck on him once. If I thought I could dent his marble heart, I'd set my cap for him even now, you can just bet. You're a chump if you don't. Any little home beats the road all holler. Take Tad, for goodness' sake, if you can get him, and be thankful you don't have to be an old maid like

GEO.

CONSTANCE LIVES WHERE EVERYTHING GOES BY GONGS

Orphans' Home,
An hour before "All Lights Out."

DEAR CHUM OF YESTERDAY:

Behold the proud mother of seventy-two — all boys!

A mother of six or seven children does not have much time to revel in real or

fancied affliction, does she? What should you say of a mother of sixty or seventy?

If you want to forget yourself and your troubles completely, get into an orphans' home. Nothing under the sun erases self-pity so quickly as to be placed in the midst of hundreds of little motherless and fatherless and homeless souls, who are thrown upon the mercy of charity or the state. They need all your love and pity. Your own private griefs vanish into nothingness before the sorrowful conditions surrounding each child waif that comes to your care.

You, dear old Chum, know the bitterness of having lost your parents. You are facing the world, in a sense, alone. Still, you have many friends who love you and who would help you if you were incapacitated and needy. You have glorious remembrances of a happy childhood and

loving care. At home, you grew up in an atmosphere of refinement, among cultured people. You have had more advantages than are common to the average American girl who goes through the public high school. A few short months, or, at most, a year or two, would train you for almost any position you might choose, because you already have a solid foundation to build on. Best of all, your little heart has never been hardened. You stand, unembittered, though sorrowfully now, I'll admit, ready to fight your own battles; but yours is the sorrow which comes in time to us all. O you aren't so badly off!

Suppose you always had had to fight your way, even when a mere baby. Suppose your loving memories of dear ones gone were suddenly snatched away. Suppose no one cared what might become of you. Suppose your poor little nature had

been so dwarfed by cruelty that you were afraid of every one. In a word, suppose your station in life had been lower than it fortunately is, and that you had been left an orphan at the age of five or seven.

Ah, you are lucky if you but contrast yourself with one of these! You already have such a start. What wouldn't I give if I could send my children out into the world with just half, I would not ask any more, just half of your accomplishments and inheritance!

This is negative comfort. I will stop preaching. Possibly you will excuse it when you read between the lines and remember that I have practised all that I now preach.

This institution has nearly three hundred inmates, from a few months old to eighteen, nineteen, and even twenty-one. Most of them leave at about eighteen, if

proper places can be found for them, while a great many find homes long before that age, where they are either legally adopted or taken into families as helpers. Scarcely a week passes but an old little orphan goes to a new home, while a new little orphan arrives to take his place.

I am called one of the officers, which amounts to being a matron for the older boys. There is another for the girls, while the boys and girls of the kindergarten and baby age have a matron over each department. Then there are our assistants, and over us all the head matron and the superintendent.

One of our buildings is devoted to schoolrooms. The teachers are usually young normal graduates who come here to get their early experience, and leave from year to year. Occasionally, however, one falls in love with her work

among these children and sticks, as do the matrons.

It is quite probable that I shall stick forever, for what mother can desert her growing young ones? And how can I, all the more, because a fresh youngster comes into my department every other week or so? There is a constant procession tied to my heartstrings.

This very winter a splendid offer from a larger and better known institution came to me, which would have meant less care with more pay, but how could I leave my boys? No, my work is here and here I shall keep on, and if, after years of careful guidance, some of my boys are started out into life on the right paths that will be reward enough for any one. Saintly? Oh, no, I'm not! It's just the mother instinct within me, which will out, like murder.

Did you ever visit an orphan asylum?

If you haven't, I know you would be amazed at the wonderful system under which the children are trained. I cannot begin to picture it to you vividly enough, or to give you any idea of the satisfaction every foster mother receives when she witnesses the transformation of a wizen-faced, half-starved, hunted-looking little creature into a robust, healthy, normal child.

They come to us from all kinds of homes. Some have had fair comforts; others, none. A very few have been happy, until death stepped in and left them unprovided for, and it is hardest for them. The great majority, though, have always been poor, and many of these destitute ones have been so utterly neglected and abused that the Home is an asylum in the truest sense of the word.

One of my boys was brought up in a

shack in the woods by a shiftless, drunken father. The ground had always been his only bed, until he was given a little white iron one in the dormitory, and he had actually hunted acorns for food, like a young savage. Another child's mother, who "worked out" until she worked out literally and died, used to lock up their mean rooms early in the morning, give her little girl five cents to buy her dinner with, and leave her on the street until she came back at night. Childlike, the nickel often went for cheap candy instead of food, or, at best, fancy crackers or a piece of frosted pie for nourishment. You ought to have seen the sickly little thing that came to us!

Each orphan has his story, and each is more pitiful than the last. You have read many sad tales of the lives of orphans, and probably all of them are true. Investiga-

tion shows us that the real histories of these unfortunates surpass even fiction.

Some arrive with their few little clothes neatly mended and packed in a pasteboard suit box; others bring nothing but their ragged selves. Many are inoculated with various skin diseases, and incipient tuberculosis has to be watched for. All need to have their teeth looked after, and it is an interesting thing to see how thankful — yes, thankful — an orphan is when it is his turn to get rid of an old acher. No fuss or petting or bribes here. It's, "Quick, now, it's your turn, Peter," and Peter obediently opens his mouth. These tots would shame our pampered brothers and sisters, and even ourselves, with their bravery when the Home dentist makes his rounds.

Everything goes by gongs — gongs and prayers. At six in the morning the rising

bell reverberates through the corridors, and the multitude of little orphans tumble out of bed in their little white nighties on to their knees to open the day with a half-awake prayer. By half-past six they have formed ranks, ready to march, two by two, down the long hallways and stairs into the dining room in a connecting building. Here are rows of tables for twelve, each covered with a cheery red cloth and steaming dishes plentifully heaped. Either a matron or one of the larger girls stands at the head of each table, ready to serve. The children file quietly in and take their places standing at the back of their chairs. Another gong, and the chairs are pulled out quietly and all sit down together, bowing their heads. A soft little bell is the signal for chanting grace, after which they fall to. On what? — oatmeal with milk and sugar, and bread, large thick slices,

sometimes with, more often without butter, if it's breakfast; soup or chowder, with potatoes for the older ones, and maybe pie or cookies, for dinner; bread and molasses or apple sauce, or berries in their season, and the best gingerbread you ever ate, if it's supper. But the dinner they like the best, except, of course, Christmas and Thanksgiving which are feasts, comes on Sundays and consists of brown bread and beans. The littlest children have milk to drink, and sometimes there is plenty for all when the Home cows have any to spare. This is only a sample of the diet, but it is a fair one. In garden time there are fresh vegetables and in apple years we are usually bountifully supplied.

When I first came to the Home I was rather surprised at what seemed to me the coarseness of the food, but when I saw

how well the orphans thrived on it and realized how much better it was than they had ever been accustomed to before, and considered the enormous puzzle of feeding so many upon the stipulation provided, I understood the careful management a bit better. After all, it's what you're used to that counts. These children have never known the delicacies we have always seen upon our tables at home, so they don't know what they miss. Perhaps they are better off for it, too, for a healthier lot I never beheld.

To go on with the day — after a suitable time a gong says "Fold your napkins," which they silently do, for no conversation is allowed during mealtime. "Ting-a-ring-a-ring!" and the process of getting in line and shoving chairs up to the table takes but a few seconds. This time the children march into chapel for a short

service, in which all participate and seem to enjoy immensely.

School begins at nine o'clock, and lasts the same number of hours as any public school. The classes are divided by grades and conducted in the most thorough manner by competent teachers.

There are play hours and duty hours, after school and at noon and on Saturdays. The boys are taught to do the "chores" around the Home farm and chop the wood, while the girls take care of the dormitories, attend to the dish-washing by turns, and, as soon as they are old enough, learn how to cook and sew and assist in the laundry at the mangle. They are taught to be proficient housekeepers, taking up all branches, just as they would in their own homes under careful mothers.

Even the very little girls soon learn to push their needles in and out, for a matron

cannot do all the mending herself. It is a pleasant sight to see a whole group of happy faces gathered together in the big sewing room, where the girls' matron superintends the fine art of keeping clothes in repair, an art often neglected by mothers in private homes, but one which every little girl ought to be taught. They darn such mammoth holes for themselves and the boys that it is almost impossible to tell where the darns leave off and the original stockings begin! Often it's a puzzle to fit a patch within a patch, for the garments that be are mended as long as there is anything left to mend.

The huge pile of petticoats, aprons, dresses, underwear and stockings being disposed of for the girls, they then pitch into the blouses and hose of the boys, though the heavy trouser patches fall to the lot of unlucky me.

The children do not dislike this work, as it might be supposed. They are made to take an interest in it, and really enjoy the sociability of the circle. Like it or not, they all have to do it, and do it properly. There are frequent rippings out. Some of the girls are natural little dressmakers and are invaluable in making over the clothes which charitable persons are continually sending to the Home. Our orphans do not wear uniforms, and that's one comfort.

Work does not take up all of the time, and it is always regulated according to the age and strength of the child. No one is overworked, but each is taught to be useful around the house and farm in order that he or she may be fortified against that day when the clang of the iron gate makes the Home a memory of the past and the great big busy world looms up invitingly.

What almost broke my heart in the beginning was to see the lack of what all children need the most, a mother's love. Care they have. Religion and schooling they have. Training for useful men and women they have. All necessary medical treatment they have. But a mother's love — who can really give that but a mother?

"You're my new mamma. I love you," greeted me from all sides the very first day I became matron. The impulse was to clasp these mites of humanity to my heart and lavish upon them all that was in me, but the head matron checked my first attempted demonstration.

"Ah, don't be too affectionate or you won't be a good disciplinarian," she cautioned. "The older children are so quick to take advantage, and remember they are the leaders of your seventy odd. A strict

rein must be held. Slack it up ever so little and you'll lose your hold!"

She was perfectly right. If I had spent a few minutes petting each child each day there wouldn't have been time for anything else, for, of course, it wouldn't be fair to fondle one and snub another. The only successful way for a person to control a number of children is to play no favorites. Treat all alike. Love each a little, none too much. Nor is this easy, because some appeal to you more than others, being prettier or uglier or more affectionate or sicklier or more precocious — a thousand qualities endear some and repulse others. Every mother of a large family has her favorites whether or not she admits it to others or to herself. My boys are all interesting and I love them all alike, apparently.

After the evening prayer, as I tuck my

littlest lambs into their downy white beds, they always stretch up their tiny arms and pucker up their rosy lips for a good night kiss. It may not be healthful for me, but what can I do — refuse to kiss the little motherless sons? Good is no name for the way they cuddle down and go to sleep afterwards — these babies, satisfied with just a crumb of love.

When sickness strikes us we care for all the minor cases, but if it is serious or contagious the child has to be sent to a hospital in a neighboring town. That is the time I feel the great cry for a mother's love in my children. How they dread to leave me, and how their lonely faces light up when I go to the ward to visit them on my afternoon off duty!

Our Home is not for orphans only, but children who have lost one parent are frequently put here to board at a very nom-

inal sum by the remaining parent who has no other means of providing for the little creatures.

Well, one day I stepped into the fifth grade to speak to the teacher a moment, just as she was saying: "This is letter day. Those of you who have mothers may write to them. Those of you who have fathers may write to them. And those of you who have neither may write to your uncles or aunts or friends or any one you please." Immediately forty-five pens began to squeak across the blue-lined sheets of paper. A slender colored child of nine sat motionless in her corner seat, with the tip of her penholder pressed between her lips. Her hand shot up, presently, and at the teacher's nod she lisped: "Pleathe, Mith White, I've thought and thought, and I ain't got no one. Who'll I write to?"

"May she write to me? I would be delighted to have a letter from Susan," I interrupted. She did, and here is what she told me:

"DEAR BOYS MATRON —

"I am well. I hop you are well. I wish you was my mamma. I ant never had no mamma, but mabe if I keep my dres klean some one will dopt me. Yore wach is hansom and so is yore rings. When I git big nuff to git marred I shal have lots of joolry to. Christmas I got a book. It were to hard for me but the pikshures is grat. I wrot Santa for a mamma. Loosy sed he woud give you any thin you assed for. Praps he dident have nuff mammas to go roun. Six of us gurls assed em offen him. Pleas anser.

"Your loving,

"SUSAN."

Yes, they all want a "mamma," and we poor matrons are hard put to it to keep from mothering them too much. Except for that one thing, do you know I really believe I'd rather have a child of mine brought up in an orphan asylum than in the average private home? Here they are not only educated and trained, but they have to be respectful and obedient. Their health isn't ruined by improper food, sweets and over-indulgence. The regular life, with its early to bed and early to rise, does all that has ever been claimed for it. No wonder Rousseau trotted his own five little Rousseaus into a home for foundlings as soon as they were born, though it must have been rather trying for their mother! He thought they would be better reared, and they probably were.

Speaking of obedience, I wish some of those weak-minded mothers who bewail

their inability to cope with their mischievous little tots of six and eight could see the way my boys mind me. They know when I speak I mean business, even though our Home does not terrorize its inmates with wire thrashings and horse whippings, like some institutions I have read about. The most drastic measure we can use is to send an offender to the superintendent, and that is a last resort, after moral suasion, extra work in play time, the denial of stipulated privileges for a fixed time, and, oh, ever so many other means have all failed.

I remember one day in particular, last summer, when all of my boys went into the woods for a picnic. The anticipation of this treat had helped to keep them unusually good for two weeks. A huge pail full of cucumbers fresh from the garden, and an enormous basket, with cookies in

one side and common crackers in the other, were joyfully carried by four of the big boys, while each of the seventy-two brought his own little tin cup. At noon Bert and Frank were delegated to run back to the Home, which wasn't over a good quarter of a mile distant for we were in our own woods, and bring up a steaming kettle of corn chowder from the kitchen. How they enjoyed it!

But this is what I am coming to. The boys built a rude camp out of some fallen logs, and covered it over with pieces of old carpet and gunnysack which they had treasured, heaven knows how long, for the occasion. Presently a shriek of joy reached me. Some one had discovered a rusty, broken-down stove. "See what we've got!" they yelled in chorus, dragging the heavy old iron toward their tent. It was midsummer. The woods were full

of dry pine needles and slash. Forest fires were the dread of the community. I hesitated, and for a moment doubted my own boys. I clapped my hands, and those nearest me became instantly silent, silencing those around them in turn. "Boys," I cried, after explaining the danger, "if I let you keep that stove, how many of you will promise on your honor never to build a fire in it?" They promised. And do you realize what a terrible temptation it must have been to real live boys to have had that old thing in their possession, and lots of wood, and yet to have been denied the fun of making it go? But they kept their words, every son of them. How's that?

Picnics and berrying trips are frequent in summer, though the greatest event of the season is the annual automobile ride, made possible by charitable persons in the

surrounding community who have cars. It would take a whole book to describe the infinite delight of that day. Nothing approaches it except Christmas, when they give an entertainment in a public hall. In winter the children slide and skate, while the warm weather finds them in the playground swings, or at their croquet set, or playing ball — real base-ball, too, with as good a team as any school.

Sunday holds one all-the-year-round treat in the shape of a stick of candy, usually peppermint or checkerberry, for each child. Even the older ones look forward to this, for it's about all the candy they have, unless some is sent in. "Thank you," from orphans means something more than just a polite term. You ought to see their glowing eyes when these harmless, striped sticks of sweet are distributed!

I took up this kind of work to forget something, which, I must admit, I have had no time to remember. When girls have a sudden break in their lives they often rush on to the stage or into charity work. The papers are full of accounts of rich young women who drown some worldly sorrow by working among the poor.

But I was not rich, and it wasn't easy for me to begin, for, though I only wanted a livable salary, I simply could not give my time for just the love of doing good. I could offer everything except money — my youth, health, strength and devotion; but, at the same time, I must manage to maintain myself.

I wrote to a school for social workers to see if they knew of any opening, and received a courteous reply stating that the demand was for trained workers nowa-

days, together with a deckle-edged, beautifully gotten up catalogue of their school for college graduates and courses for those already in college. Next I tried a church charity, but both the summer schools and play grounds had their corps of assistants all selected months ahead of time. Experienced teachers filled the settlement houses. I inquired at the board of charities but there wasn't a vacancy anywhere. It seemed, save for the matter of donations, as if one couldn't be charitable without being trained!

Then this opportunity turned up through an educational agency, where I met the Home superintendent, who was interviewing some applicants. He took me in as assistant matron at sixteen dollars a month and found. Now I receive twenty, which is more than ample for my needs. Of course I dress in the simplest

possible way. It would be wicked to parade fine clothes before these unfortunates, though I always try to wear pretty, bright colors. My two weeks' vacation takes up what I save each year, and the rest goes toward little dainties for my children when they're sick.

You may be luckier than I. If you apply right away at some diocesan house you may get some playroom work for next summer. Vacations bring vacancies, and, though I'm not authorized to say this, the kindergarten matron hints that she may go to another institution this coming April. If she does, there's a chance for you, for I know my recommendation would count a whole lot with our superintendent.

You might prefer some different department in philanthropic work, for there are a great many branches, homes for neglected

children, juvenile courts, institutions for the blind and for the lame, settlement houses, district social workers, ad libitum. But they all want trained workers.

Now, there is plenty of room in my three-quarters bed, and I haven't had a visitor since I came to the Home. Would you like to come up here and just see for yourself what institutional life is like? Do, dear old Chummie, come up and let's review our yesterdays.

I should immediately take you out into the yard to play a game the Home youngsters love, where you sing " London Bridge is falling down, falling down," and when it fell I should say: " My fair lady, choose. Which would you rather have, seventy children and no husband, or a husband and —? "

Which would you, now, honest? I know which I would.

The lights have been out for some time. Even my stealthy candle is flickering its last. This (*) stands for a good night kiss from your very sleepy

CONSTANCE.

LOUISE'S BONNETS ARE SONNETS

"Mademoiselle Louise,"
Countryside, Maine.

DEARIE:

Roxana and I have just returned from dinner. As usual, our boarding-house mistress regaled us with roast pork and apple pie. Such quantities of porcine products

have I consumed this winter that I honestly expect to be turned into a pig like the baby in "Alice in Wonderland." Prepare yourself for a letter full of grunts and squeals.

Roxana is rooting in the front room of our shop, trimming the windows, I guess. Roxana is my partner, and the dandiest girl in the whole world. She has made the most out of me, when there wasn't very much to do with.

I can't begin to tell you how amazed I was to hear from you. It has indeed been ages since we corresponded, though I have thought of you often and often and still have your class picture reposing in my fishnet under the mantelpiece in our sitting-room. But what confounded me was the fact that you thought I knew enough to tell you anything. I never supposed that any one ever thought I knew beans.

I was always so negative and insignificant and backward and never the head of anything in my life, until Roxana discovered me.

I am, now, thanks to her, and I'll tell you how to be " some punkins," too, if you like.

Dearie, I know you have brains and can work with your head, but if they aren't trained don't despair. There is always something you can do if you want to hard enough. Even I have found my place. Let that comfort you, for what stupid Louise Jackson could do, surely brilliant Joy Kent can more than equal.

Know, then, little lady, that we, Roxana and I, own and run the " Mademoiselle Louise," Elite Millinery, the only establishment worth noticing of its kind for miles around. We put the two former milliners, who had been here since the

year one, completely to rout after our first season, and have been making money, hand over fist, at least, way above our expenses, ever since.

Our little shop is on the main street, right in the centre of the business section, such as it is in the country. We have a tiny front parlor, and a large, light workroom, where I am now penning this screed. Two plate glass windows are our pride, and we keep them filled with beautiful and artistic creations of fashionable headgear, which we constantly replace by other still more attractive specimens. Roxy has a regular fad for window trimming, an accomplishment in itself, of which she certainly is a master.

She's a wonder, and can do 'most anything. Besides windows, she does all the buying of stock, sells all the hats, gets up little advertising schemes that do the busi-

ness and writes them out herself for the two weekly papers. (You've got to keep advertising to get anywhere, in the country more than in the city, for the backwoods folks all take the papers and read every word in them. You ought to see how they drive in when we advertise a special sale. Talk about bargain hunters; the city people aren't in it!) Roxana also tends to the hiring of help, when we have any, keeps the books, makes improvements as fast as she thinks we can afford them, and, in fact, looks out for the entire business end, just like a man, for I'm a dismal failure and no help to her at all. She knows how to make money grow out of nothing and is just full of new ideas.

My share in the work wouldn't amount to much without Roxana's. Still, I can see every hat I make in my mind's eye, before it's begun. I do all the designing

and most of the trimming. Roxy helps me, doing mostly the tedious tasks, the making, linings, coverings, bands, and finishings, working like a Trojan, while I concoct bits of chiffon and velvet and ribbon and lace, together with gay feathers and dainty little flowers into veritable dreams. Sometimes, in the rush season, we get an apprentice, as Roxana is often kept in the parlor trying on.

I always made my own hats when I was a girl; my Aunt Martha taught me how, and she taught me mighty well. It's a knack, I guess, to put certain colors and materials together that blend well. They suggest themselves to me, without any apparent effort on my part, just natural instinct. I can turn any old ribbon into a splashing bow, and change over your last year's hat so you wouldn't recognize it.

Madame always said my bonnets were

sonnets. So I got on very fast with her, and that was where I met Roxana, at the Bon Ton Shop, where we both learned our trade. She had been there nearly a year when I began my three months of giving my time. Poor Roxy, she didn't succeed very well in the workroom, but was such a crackerjack seller that Madame kept her in the sales department most of the time. Roxy didn't like the arrangement very well because it left her too little time to learn the trade thoroughly. No sooner did she demonstrate that she could dispose of last season's hats than she was made to do it continually.

At the end of three months I began to draw a salary so small that modesty forbids my bragging about it. Presently Madame discovered that I could design, and I got a microscopic raise.

Meanwhile, Roxy was put in charge of

the workroom to keep the girls busy. You just ought to see the amount of work she got out of those apprentices, when she wasn't selling hats! She and I were devoted chums from the minute we first laid our eyes on each other. We always lunched together, and she would astound me with the most astonishing plans for becoming rich over night that she fairly took my breath away. One day she came out flat, in the middle of a chocolate éclair, and put it right up to me like this:

"Louise, do you realize that you and I are doing most of the work that's being done at the Bon Ton? Your planning saves Madame the cost of a high-priced designer, for which you receive the immoderate figure of seven dollars a week; while I grind stuff out of the poor girls and sell more in a single day than all of them put together."

"Shall we strike and demand another raise?" I suggested.

"Raise! Fiddlesticks!" she exploded. "What would that amount to — two dollars more for the next year, maybe? No, we're clever, if we only knew it," she cried. "Let's quit and start a little shop of our own, say in time for the Easter opening. That will give us a chance to buy up some odds and ends and we can work nights and Sundays making hats to sell for ourselves. We needn't leave until the last minute, say three weeks before Easter. Madame always has to get extra help at that time, anyway, and her opening will be pretty well cared for, so it won't be leaving her exactly in the lurch. Besides, we can't afford to leave at any dull time of the year, for our first opening must show money and we can't pay rent on an idle store waiting for the proper time

either." Roxy raved on, while I sat appalled at her daring.

Well, we did it, just as she had planned.

Roxana selected this village because she had once visited here and knew that lots of the old families had plenty of spondulics and kept themselves up to date.

We hired our store without the slightest knowledge where the second month's rent would come from (we had saved enough for the first, or, rather, Roxy had). Rents are cheap here.

The next thing was to name the shop. "It must be something Frenchy," Roxana insisted, "and we must keep 'Paris' models in the windows. People flock after foreign things and think they're getting something chic, if it only has some kind of a high-sounding label on it." Finally she decided to call it after me, for my name is really French, you know. I

agreed. It's always best to agree with Roxana.

Our stock consisted of two dozen or so trimmed hats, and a motley assortment of frames and flowers and remnants, picked up one by one from Madame and the department store sales. Our first hats were pretty, inexpensive and stylish.

Roxy, the Foxy, plunked a notice in the papers as soon as we opened the shop. My, didn't we work like the very dickens, night and day! When the great day came for the Easter opening, our feet scarcely touched earth. And we sold every last hat in the place and had orders for five more. Customer after customer came and went. We found a small boy to deliver the boxes to those who lived in the immediate village, that evening, thus keeping our limited stock of ready-to-wears on hand to show to the next who came in

during the afternoon. When a lady liked one that was marked "sold," she left her order for a similar shape, so that from that opening we took in enough business to keep us busy for some time.

Never will Roxy and I forget the joy of that first day. We danced a jig all over the shop after closing hour, and hugged each other 'most to death. We came, we saw, we succeeded! I suppose the chief reason was because our prices were reasonable and because we offered something different than the old-time milliners had displayed year after year. Roxy vows the name did it.

We felt that we had earned the right to some credit and ordered a lot of new stock. I planned and trimmed away, while Roxana met the expenses, and found us a new boarding house. Soon a new rug found its way to our bare parlor floor, and

little by little the front room of our shop became a tastefully fitted up show-room. We used up everything available, making dainty little effects out of almost nothing.

Roxy oiled the wheels and has kept them going ever since. Except for our first order of stock on credit, which we got paid up after a while, though it worried me to pieces to owe anything and made Roxy laugh at me, we have kept free from debt and made a pretty good thing out of our experiment, so that now we are saving a little.

"Once a customer always a customer," is our motto.

Madame heard of our success and offered us our jobs back at any time in case we returned to the city, but Roxana said she thought we were better off here where the living is cheaper, and I guess we are. Anyway, we are both happier than we

ever were before. Roxy hasn't any "own folks," while I, as you know, have only the aunt who brought me up. Our little shop is the best home either of us ever knew, for it's full of real home-spirit and good-will.

Perhaps I ought not relate what I am going to tell you, but this is what helped me to make up my mind to "amount to something." One night I was lying out in the hammock on the side piazza when I heard Aunt Martha say to my uncle from the other side of the open window: "Alfred, what on earth are we going to do with Louise when she gets through school? I suppose she'll have to stay at home" (the tone was anything but desirous), "for she hasn't brains enough to go into a business office. I doubt if she'll ever make anything of herself."

"She's a good housekeeper, isn't she?"

my uncle broke in irritably, from behind his newspaper. "Let her help you around the house," and therewith dismissed the whole subject of my future. My aunt sighed. I can hear her yet — a long-suffering, martyr-like sigh, because I might have to remain at home.

I didn't have any brains — well enough I knew that! But I was good for something, and Roxy says — but Roxy is biased and thinks altogether too much of me.

One thing I forgot to tell you. We, Roxy and I, go to the city twice a year to "study the Boston and New York styles," as it's announced by clever Roxy. So far, we haven't been able to afford the trip to New York and have to study the New York styles in Boston. The little deception is practised by all the up-and-coming country milliners, and sells lots

of hats. The latest from New York is almost as enticing as the latest from Paris. After all, it's nearly true, for we do see all the imported stock. Even rich milliners, like Madame, sometimes advertise that they have gone abroad to prepare for the next season, when they don't leave the city at all. It's a trick of the trade, harmless and profitable, if a bit dishonest.

But this fall, this very coming fall, we're going to see the great metropolis, not only to look at styles but to see the sights. I'd be scared to death if it wasn't for Roxana. She's a regular lioness and not afraid of anything.

To sum up, these facts stand out clearly from our little venture: We own our souls. We save more, after paying our rent, board and stock, than we ever could have hoped to in the city on salary. We have a cozy little sitting-room and bed-room,

for our first happy home. We have our place and count for something with these fine, large-hearted country people, among whom we have made many friends. It is enough. More than we anticipated.

Dearie, if you have any liking for millinery, we will gladly apprentice you right now. We have got to get some one to help, anyway, and it would be a fine chance for you to learn the trade under a not too strenuous teacher. We could pay you a little, though not much, while in the city you'd probably have to give three months of your time. Roxy is lovely and an inspiration worth coming for alone. Perhaps, later, we could get you a good position with Madame, for our partnership isn't big enough for three.

I believe you'd make a dandy buyer, you've always had so much money to spend, and they get fine pay. Madame

usually does her own, but her business has increased so much lately that she offered to send Roxana abroad on the job, this summer. Roxy says she won't leave me, but I shall do my Christian duty and try to make her take advantage of such a chance. If you'll come while she is gone, I'm sure she'd not hesitate a minute.

Write me again very soon. I shall be anxious.

From your loving friend,

LOUISE.

N. B. Roxana always O. K.'s everything before it goes out. She says: "Tell that little Joy girl to nab that little Tadpole, and let us fill her orders for the very latest styles from Paris, including babies' bonnets." Roxy is an awful joker, but I must say I agree with her this time.

LOU.

January the fourth.

VI

ESTELLE CAME NEAR DYING IN HER FLIMSY BALLET SKIRT

Central House, No matter where,
Because I sha'n't be here to-morrow.

How do you do, Honey?

You must be up against it pretty hard to come to me. Think of your asking me for real advice! I wonder what or who

or where you imagine I am, anyway, that you consider me worth looking up in distress. When I took to the boards I thought that the great little town of Maywood cast a disapproving eye upon me, which said plainly enough: "I disown you. You're no longer a daughter of mine! You're an outcast — a lost soul seeking perdition in the quickest possible way!" Yet you write me for advice, Honey!

I have laughed and cried over your letter. Laughed to hear you modestly say that you would be willing to take a "second" part in an opera to begin with — to begin with, hark'e! — because you could warble some little tunes in the old home song-book. Why, little one, to sing second would rank right next to the prima donna and would require not only a remarkable voice but probably years of striving and

practice. For my part, I should die with joy to get anything above the chorus!

How harsh this must sound to you! Yet the reality is so much harsher that I couldn't for a moment deceive your frail hopes.

I laughed even louder when I realized that an old home girl was taking me and my life seriously. "She must think I'm a star," I whispered to myself, "or she never would have stooped to question me." A star? I'm about as near being a star as that scintillating, five-point piece of gilt paper pasted on the crown of any queen of the fairies in any amateur extravaganza is apt to shine in the heavens. The only starry thing about me is my name, which means a star. Here is where the weeps come in. I'm not even a shooting star. Just a flickering firefly!

I've cried off all the paint that wouldn't

wash off, sitting alone in this cheap, stuffy little room, with your letter in my lap, wondering how to answer it in the fairest and wisest way for your own good. In my heart there is a soft, happy little feeling to think that one of the old girls I loved so well long ago should turn to me in time of trouble.

Before me lie your ambitions, your untried hopes, your longing for the "wonderful world." You should not have left out the "fearful" along with the "wonderful." But that marks the difference between inexperience and experience, between youth and age. Yes, I know, we are exactly the same number of years old; but you probably look like a baby beside of weary, travel-stained me!

Beside your fresh little self with its unknown career, my own struggles for fame upon the stage dance before my eyes. I

was once as ambitious as you, more so, vastly more so, in reality, for I knew what I wanted to do, had a fixed aim and centred all my energies around it, ever since I was old enough to know anything. The stage was to be my life. I did not have to ask anybody what I should do, and those who advised me against it of their own free will, I did not heed. I couldn't. It was in me. I was born to it, or thought I was. The love of it surpassed everything else that ever came into my life.

You remember the little church dramatics and school plays? Wasn't I always the leading lady? I foresaw myself a radiant star, outshining all the rest of the most famous cast ever known, with the whole world bowing at my feet. And now, after years of struggle, struggle, struggle, what am I?

I'm the leading lady at a One-Night Stand!

(Quick, the drop curtain! I couldn't bear the hisses, I've tried so hard!)

This company is a pretty good one. The manager treats us like human beings. As a rule, we have enough to eat and get our pay on time.

You would turn up your saucy nose at this musty, dilapidated old ark of a Central House, and yet it's a palace compared to some of the places I've slept in. Many a time, in short jumps, we've landed in a railroad station in the middle of the night and sat huddled up until morning because we didn't have the price of a bed.

Twice, when the show didn't pan out as well as was expected, I've been stranded in little God-forsaken, jumping-off places out in the Middle West. The first time I pawned my watch and rings and raised

enough to get back home. But the last time, just listen to this, you little stage aspirant, the last time I didn't have a red! Neither did any one else, except the manager, who skipped immediately for the safest and most convenient place in the world — "parts unknown."

The men of the troupe freighted it back. The girls traded some of their trinkets for cash, or else picked up the acquaintance of some travelling salesmen who charitably volunteered to look out for them. I went to the only hotel, or apology for one, and became a waitress. It took me over three months to earn what I owed for the time the company had failed to make a go of it and was strapped there, together with enough for home transportation.

The others all said I was a fool, and perhaps I was. They got out of the prairies in less than a week, while I stayed behind

miserably alone until I could start out free and clear again on my road to fame. That three months' change was a good thing, however, for I got nicely rested up, living a regular life in a fixed habitation again, after so many months on the road. The people were kind, in their homely rough way, and two men in particular fairly tried to insist upon my borrowing the money to return home with of them. I didn't take it. I just couldn't. No coin for me from strange men, not even as a loan — my twig was bent early in a different direction, thanks to my saintly mother.

It is quite natural for my thoughts to wander in this manner, for my whole life is spent in wandering from place to place. One day we play one town, the next another, provided it isn't too far distant and train connections can be made in time. The theatre, the sleeping car and

the middle-class hotels — these are my home.

From your seat in the audience, you, Joy, have listened rapturously to the intoxicating strains of the orchestra, have been dazzled by the glittering illumination, the artistic scenery, the modern stage in all its splendor, where you have witnessed the finished performance of an opera, drama, comedy or vaudeville entertainment, and you have gone home tempted to go yourself into this wonderland. Did it ever occur to you that probably every single person who ever entered a theatre was at some time or other similarly tempted? Who has not said in his heart: "I, too, want to go on the stage?"

Fortunately this business of being stage-struck does not strike deeply into the hearts of many. With most of us the desire is transient and easily forgotten.

That greatest of all playwrights knew what he was talking about when he said "all the world's a stage," and luckily most of us puppets are content to perform our parts upon the great wide stage of life, leaving the artificial stage for those few to whom to act is to live.

In this, as in all other professions, many persons profess what they can never hope to attain. Actors there are a-plenty, who cannot act the least wee mite. Thousands of these half-failures tread the boards, earning barely enough to keep body and soul together. Many of the wiser ones drift, broken in spirit, into the cobblers, barbers, clerks, and shopkeepers they were originally meant to be, while others go on and on, vainly deluded and ever hopeful that some bright day their destiny may be made manifest to the critical, uncompromising world.

Many are lured by the glitter of the footlights who have no idea of what takes place behind the wings. Countless try it where one sticks, for the long, continuous rehearsal-performance, the uncertainty of engagements, the unpaid weeks of lay-off in summer, the small salary and the great demands upon it, soon discourage the majority.

"I could wish, for my part," wrote Goethe, "that our theatre were as narrow as the wire of a rope-dancer, that no inept fellow might dare to venture on it, instead of being, as it is, a place where every one discovers in himself a capacity enough to flourish and parade." I am not calling you an "inept fellow," Honey, but the world is full of them.

The stage is overcrowded, terribly so. Really fine actors for the leading rôles abound, while understudies are as numer-

ous as the sands of the sea. There is always room in the zenith for a new star, but, oh, of what brilliancy and perfection must it be! And, oh, how briefly does it shine after all its striving to let its light be seen!

They are the ones who receive the thousand-dollars-a-night salaries you read about in magazine and publicity articles, while we poor fireflies are lucky to get our twenty-five or thirty a week, out of which we have to pay all of our living and travelling expenses, except railroad fares, and buy most of our costumes. Then, too, most of us are contracted for only a season of thirty-five weeks, you must realize. The rest of the time is a money-less " vacation."

Honey, I am not going to moralize. The stage has its temptations, as you already must know, for they are kept con-

stantly in the limelight. We actors have practically no home or social life, as even the best of us spend but a few weeks in one place. This may account a little for our falling into many of the pitfalls which surround us. But we don't have to fall into them. There are many noble, earnest, hard-working men and women in this highly respectable profession, and I would not hesitate for a second to recommend the life to a girl brought up with your strict principles. What's in a person will come out anywhere, though perhaps the stage will show it up a bit sooner than an unheard-of, secluded job, out of range of the public eye.

Now to dissect you, Honey. Physically you're trig and pretty enough, young enough, and probably have as much endurance as the rest of us. You might become a clever soubrette or a pony. Men-

tally you're bright enough. Your education will do. Morally (no one ought ever to vouch for another's morals, but I'd stake on your settling the stage-Johnnies' hash!) — the moral strength of any Kent speaks for itself. But, whoops, my dear! here's where the shoe pinches — you haven't the Thespian temperament.

No, you haven't. Don't dispute me, Hon. Would you have written me an ambiguous letter, sighing that you hadn't a single talent and didn't know what you wanted to do, if you had really desired to go on the stage? No, indeed! The letter would have been all stage from the entrance to the exit. You would have rattled on about your taken-for-granted, histrionic ability in a most convincing way. The little feeble hint about your voice only assures me that you have never entertained serious thought of making anything of it.

Any girl can sing, dear child, unless she's a monotone, and there aren't many of them, more's the pity!

I thought I could once. I joined a chorus, a third-rater, in a third-rate musical comedy, and tried to learn to kick over my head. I strained my poor little voice to the bursting point and contorted myself like a kangaroo; but I was no good. I can act a little; that's my line.

Oh, those gum-chewing chorus girls! I couldn't endure the thought of your getting among them. Their standard isn't quite so high as you've been used to. Such language! Such cheapness! Poor vulgar little things, most of them, and yet their hearts are big. I simply couldn't live the way they did. Many a lonely luncheon I had on just bananas during those dismal days. They were three for five in the city, and so filling! I used to crawl away under

the straggly trees in the park and eat them all by myself. I roomed away from the rest of the girls, too, and they used to mock me with "Mamma's Angel Child," "Old Prune," and other loving epithets. I suppose I was a prudish little prig, for it was my first experience on the stage and it was all so new and strange to me. If the nature-given, insatiable love of the art had not been deep rooted in my breast — a love which can never be cultivated by any number of years of study and practice — I should have sickened and died right there in my flimsy ballet skirt.

If you had not asked the advice of a dozen others engaged in different lines of work, but had written that you were determined to sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, on the stage, I should have held up my hands from the depths and cried: "Come on in, Honey! The water's cold,

but, my, it's bracing! Don't be afraid to dive head-first. I'll help you keep afloat until you have learned how to strike out for yourself."

If you loved the stage as I do, you would find your heart's content and marvellous satisfaction in the little applause and littler fame which you might receive, while in the far distant future there would be always the possibility of the shimmering firefly ascending so high in the heavens that it finally loomed up into a translucent star.

I should have told you of my experience at a dramatic school, where all that I learned had to be untaught when I began to tread the boards for hard cash.

I should have written you a treatise on the art of interviewing managers, what to expect and what to say, where to go to find them and how to get at them when

once they are located, for managers are as elusive as fleas.

Even might I have gone so far as to have found you a part, consisting of a cap and apron and "Tea is served, Madame!"

But, Honey, I feel way down deep in my too calloused organ that men call a heart that you have a different part to act. Your hero will be yours behind the scenes as well as in front of the audience. Your kisses will be real kisses. Your spoken words of love will be answered by more than the mere clapping of hands. I envy you. I would change places with you in a moment, if I could.

As a child I could mimic anybody. Every one said I had talent. It was my undoing, though perhaps I should have been undone, anyway, if no one had ever made so foolish a remark. Among us

girls, I was always the queen of amateur theatricals. You did many things in school better than I, but you must concede that, in this, I excelled you. And yet, what am I now? — a poor little nobody who has arrived nowhere and must still keep on! O Honey, is it worth it?

I am crying again, so that my writing blurs. Excuse a great baby who is a little homesick for the happy old times.

Oh, what's the use of troubling you! I'm just a bit sentimental, I guess, and had better hustle and get ready for rehearsal.

The next time you write I shall expect to hear that you have become a fixed star in the heart of your husband, so shoo away all thoughts of becoming a firefly, and consider the loving wisdom of

ESTELLE.

DOLLY HANDLES THE LOCKS OF DEPARTED CHINAMEN

Room 23, Bailey Building, Belleville.

"Oh, there was a little girl,
And she had a little curl,
And it hung right down on her forehead.
And when she was good
She was very, very good — "

We will stop right there, for she must be you, Joy, for you were very, very good to write to me, and I always picture you trying to blow high enough over your nose to chase away those little stray curls of yours.

I hadn't the slightest idea as to what you or Betty or Anne, or any of the other dear old girls, might be doing; and had hoped, in a comfortable sort of way, that you were all married and living happily ever after.

In the effort to win my way amid the rush and turmoil of the everyday working world I have lost sight of many of my schoolmates. It was indeed a pleasure to hear from you, and, although the clouds may seem to hang rather shadowy over you just at this time, you must not forget that old hope of the silver lining.

Your letter reaches me on the eve of a

great revolution — a revolution in my business. On this account everything is chaotic in my mind, but in spite of the fact I hasten to contribute my small share of advice.

When you were a little girl did you love fairy tales? And do you recall that one of Grimm's, I think, where handsome Prince Charming rescues a beautiful Princess, confined in a high stone tower, by climbing up her golden hair? He used to steal under her window and chant something like this:

> "Lettice, Lettice, let down your hair,
> That I may climb without a stair."

I believe the Princess was called Lettice after some magnificent lettuce plants which grew in her garden.

That story made a great impression on my infant mind, and I used to go up into

our old garret and play I was the lovely Princess by hanging my head out of the window. You know what long yellow locks I had as a child. Well, no Prince Charming came along, but one day my father came home earlier than usual and spied me. He said he didn't see anything charming about it, but that I had scared him almost to death. He stopped the fairy game and took away my first delightful romance. But the mischief was done. From that moment I began to admire my hair and loved to handle it. I became enormously proud of it. My future career was decided right then and there, I believe, if I may be said to have a career.

You don't know what I do, either, I'll wager. Well, it's a hair-raising occupation! I wonder if you would have considered it worth your while to hunt me up

if you had known. I believe you would. Being a sensible girl, you would not shun to investigate, at least, a mode of livelihood which is seized upon so eagerly by thousands of working girls to-day.

Truth will out — the dreadful truth. Joy, I am the beloved of beautiful women and some few, would-be beautiful men, mostly of the dandy breed. I'm a doctor of beauty. I take care of the beautiful hair, beautiful hands and beautiful feet of beautiful women who take beautiful care of their beautiful selves. You may shudder at the feet! I did at first. Let me tell you that beautiful feet are not to be scorned, and that they need more care by far than the face and hands which are exposed to the sunlight and air and so better able to take care of themselves.

I am a shampooer, a dresser of hair, a manicurist, a chiropodist, a masseuse,

child's barber; in fact, all kinds of a beauty specialist, to a certain extent.

Beyond that certain extent I do not go, which makes the difference between me and a regular beauty specialist of the ordinary sort. I take care of natural beauty and let it go at that. I do not try to improve on nature. I absolutely refuse to ruin the complexions of ignorant people who are only too eager to be cast in a poisonous mold in the vain attempt to get rid of their facial blemishes.

I cleanse those parts of the body which many women cannot do well themselves, or think they can't. By legitimate massage I invigorate their torpid skins and scalps and keep them in good condition.

One thing I do which I hate to confess, but I'd have to go out of business if I stopped it. I dye and bleach hair. When women are silly enough to change the

natural color of their hair to a tawny auburn, pseudo chestnut or a glaring peroxide tint, I always warn those who have never done it before of the consequences, as tactfully as truth will permit, telling them how it will have to be done over and over again as fast as it grows out and what it does to the life of the hair. It eases my conscience, though I do not lose much business by the audacity, for they will have it, especially such people as come to the down-town beauty parlors of a large city, which is where I learned the trade.

All women despise the streaked age. It betrays their fleeting youth, and they forget all about the fact that it heralds their stately matronhood. A very few, brief years, and all the unnatural coloring will look ridiculous. The gloss which ought to shine from their silvery white tresses

will all be gone. It will be a mercy if they don't have to wear a wig. Yet they will dye as long as they live, some of them.

Among my clients (I don't like to call them patients), who are of a higher order of women, this habit is going out of fashion. Refinement abhors the artificial. It is the cheaper class of get-rich-quick ladies, who say "you was," shop girls, and the like, who scandalize nature with their rolls (vulgarly called rats), puffs, little curls, false foundations, chignons, psyches, and switches galore.

You may be thinking that hairdressers themselves are the worst offenders. Many of them are, with their outlandish, ultra-fuzzy heads. But there is some excuse for them, poor things. They do it to attract business. I am thankful I do not have to work with that class any more.

Of course there are exceptions. A few

people have so little hair of their own that they are ashamed of it and try to help it out with a litttle mixture of hemp and the locks of some departed (maybe a Chinaman). In this way they're apt to lose what little they already have, which might be coaxed into some semblance of decency by the simple process of dressing it differently.

When I tackle a helpless listener like you I always begin to theorize, but it makes me so furious to see beautiful natural hair ruined by unbeautiful false hair that I want to impress the wickedness of it upon any one who asks me about my work.

I don't regard my business lightly. It's my sustenance, my means of existence, the way I spend hours and weeks and years. I am after the best and most lasting results. There are plenty of shams in this

same trade, who don't care whether they spoil a pretty face, kill a mass of healthy raven locks, or make it necessary for a toe to be chopped off. I do. I do unto others as I would that they should do unto me in this rather ticklish occupation. And I succeed, gradually, to be sure, but perceptibly.

I love the human hair. It offers a study far more complicated and absorbing than you might think. The other branches, the manicuring, chiropody and massage, appeal to me only as necessities which need to be well attended to.

My first two years of preparation were spent in a beauty parlor in a city, as I have said. It seemed very exhausting, back-breaking work for some months. Jumping from one customer to another, now a shampoo, now a manicure, from early morning until half-past five in the after-

noon, we girls were kept unmercifully at it.

Sometimes we did not have time to take our usual forty minutes for lunch. Often an orange or a sandwich, hastily gobbled in a little back corner, had to suffice until the noontime rush was over. Lots of days I had to wait until three o'clock for a bite to eat, although my breakfast had been at seven and I had been hustling every minute since.

Once in a while there were slack days, when terrible storms kept the shoppers at home (and they had to be quite terrible ones, too). Did we slack up? Never! Then it was we went over the stock, combing out the cases full of false hair which had become a trifle mussed in the handling.

The woman in charge of us girls was a regular slave driver. She taught us all

very clearly what the word " boss " meant. The girls hated and feared her. She discharged us for almost nothing. If she caught two of us talking together in low tones, she assumed it was against her and fired us on the first provocation. My, the girls who came and went during the time I was there!

Poor porters on Pullmans — I know how they suffer, for it was taken for granted that we received lots of tips and our salaries were cut accordingly. Some of the girls had a faculty for getting tips. I had a dreadful time to bring myself to it. Foolish as it may seem, I never could accept tips from the occasional men who came in to be dolled up, and who always, disinterestedly or otherwise, waived away their change. Women aren't so generous, especially the transients.

As soon as I felt myself competent,

and had saved up enough to buy a set of the necessary little instruments, clippers, buffers, etc., I began to solicit a little patronage of my own. I had a neat business card printed, which I distributed among all the fine ladies of my acquaintance. This brought in a few orders, which I filled evenings, still keeping my position in the city. It was too hard that way. I knew I couldn't stand it long.

Summer came. One of my patrons, the most paying one I had because she always had the whole family done, was going to the beach. She suggested that I go to the same resort and take a room in a cottage near her hotel, offering to recommend me to several of her friends who were also going and to other guests as soon as she knew them well enough.

That was the beginning of my business. The summer was so successful that I kept

quite a list of the same clients, who didn't live too far away, right along after I returned to the city, and soon had all I could attend to.

There was one great trouble with this arrangement; and it was a big one to me. Those wealthy women of leisure did not keep their appointments. If any trivial thing arose to alter their plans, they would call me up on the telephone, maybe an hour or two before I was to start out, and say sweetly: "Would you mind not coming this afternoon? I have such a headache!" or "I forgot all about that bridge party," or "I've decided to wait until to-morrow. To-morrow would be just as convenient, would it not?" It would not! But I couldn't argue it over the telephone. I had to acquiesce; it was business. My time was lost. I was so much out. It was too late to make any

engagement for that particular afternoon or evening, and to-morrow was already filled by other people whom I could not put off, no matter how often they did it to me. The hole in the profits caused by this laxitude was so tremendous that it made my pocketbook mighty uncertain.

That is why I am hoping to open up a little beauty parlor of my own, where I can serve as many as graciously come to me. I have engaged a room in one of the best equipped buildings in Belleville, where the majority of my clients live. I am, in fact, writing you at one of my manicure tables in that very room, which I expect to have all settled and ready for business by the first of next week. I wish you were here to help me arrange it.

If you think you would like to follow in the steps of the fairy Princess with the golden hair, I'll be happy to take you in.

I intended to engage a girl, later on, if the business picked up, and would infinitely prefer to initiate a green one rather than have to keep my eye on one who did everything the wrong way.

It is a beautiful business and can be made to pay, if you go into it with the same determination to work that you would have to if you were a nurse or a doctor. Lots of inferior girls take up manicuring because they think it is easy, caring little whether they do well or not as long as they are sure of their money on Saturday night. They haven't helped the reputation of the trade any, but they have hurt themselves and many promising, high-class workers, who exist in this, as in all other lines of work.

You needn't hesitate about starting in. It will not belittle you in the slightest, and if you like to play Fairy Godmother and

make folks beautiful as well as I do, some day you may be prosperous enough to open a little parlor of your own.

You would be just the girl for me, too, the more I think of it, on account of your dainty, polished, refined personality, if you will come. Will you?

In the midst of my heaps of unsettled furniture, which has just been moved in to-day, I remain,

Expectantly yours,

DOLLY.

P. S. Joy, I want to help you if I can. And I can be of more help to you, just now, than you can to me, if you will do what I advise. Marry, Joy, marry; and then come to me to get scalped! Love is the greatest beautifier in the world. Don't let it escape you, my Princess. The stone tower of work is very strong and high.

Let down your hair to your beloved Prince Charming before you are so old you need a wig, and make at least one fairy tale come true.

VII

WINIFRED CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN SHE FIRST DROVE THE NEIGHBORS CRAZY WITH "CHOPSTICKS"

Studio, Sunday Afternoon.

DEAR KENTY:

Blessed be Sunday! It's the only day I have a minute to do anything in. All my calls, letters, negligée ribbons, wary buttons, glove mending, yes, and even darning — Sunday!

I have been thinking of you constantly ever since you asked me to, and I truly want to say something comforting. At present, after a week's dissipation in music, I've got a big head. All my mind will hold is tum-tum-tum, one-two-three, accent on the first beat, now try it over once more! The last phrase I've struggled to drum into a child's brain always sings in my brain until a new struggle comes along. It makes one almost maudlin to have five-finger exercises and scales running rife with one's faculties. Walking or talking or eating soup, it must be to rhythm. I can't even bat a tennis ball until the beat comes round! All last night my astral body was performing the most grotesque acrobatic stunts to syncopation ("sink-your-patience," one of my young hopefuls called it yesterday at his lesson). Truly, the only way to

get rid of one air is to begin on another.

You are not the only one to whom changes have come. I was obliged to go out into what you are pleased to designate as "the wonderful world" almost as soon as we moved away from Maywood. Dad's business went back on him and he was forced to go into bankruptcy. He has never recovered. Before the crash came we all knew he was doomed, and that was the real reason for our leaving the old town where everybody had known dad from a boy. He couldn't bear their pity.

To make a long story short, as they say when they intend to bore you with the whole of it, we came here to live with little or nothing except blue blood and ancestors, which do not count at all when the rent comes due. I shudder to recall the

wan look on mamma's face and the helpless twitching of poor dad's hands as we three sat night after night in our little family circle discussing dollars and cents, principally cents.

Early each morning dad would start out hopefully in search of some kind of employment, only to come home at supper time, crushed, dejected and silent. In the evenings he pored over the want ads. But who wants to hire a man over fifty-eight — a has-been — a failure? His case was more pitiful than you or I will ever know, unless we too seek work at his age.

As soon as we had had a chance to get settled we took two school teachers to board, and, after a while, a miserable little clerkship turned up for dad, which he gladly accepted; my dad, who had often had ten men working for him in the prosperous past!

Be patient, Kenty dear, I'm coming to it, for I know you want to hear about work and success and not about family ups and downs. I always have to begin at the beginning, and "festina lente," as our class motto directed. No one ever followed it more closely than I.

I suppose every girl has to ask herself the same questions which you put forth in your letter to me, at least, every girl who has her own way to make: What am I good for? What do I know? What can I do to earn my living?

For me there has always been only one answer — music. Not vocal, thank goodness, or it might have been even harder than it was; but piano. I really cannot remember when I first began to drive the neighbors crazy with "Chopsticks." Mamma taught me when I was a very small girl, and after I entered grammar

school I took of Miss Bangsky. You studied with her, too, didn't you? When I left her I was a fairly accurate, all-round player, and could read almost anything at sight. You remember my place was always at the piano at all of our little social affairs.

When any one used to say to me as a child: "What are you going to be when you grow up, little girl?" I used always to reply: "I'm going to be like Miss Bangsky and give recitals in the town hall." I thought then that all you had to do was to be sweet-voiced and smiley and wear sparkling rings on your pretty hands and a plumey hat and know how to count "one and two and," the way she did. I never doubted that all piano teachers were rich and had more pupils than they could well take care of.

So when the necessary time came for

me to hustle I knew exactly what I must do. Music was my forte. I would teach. But whom? That was the sticker. Where were my pupils to come from? I didn't know a soul in the town!

While dad was out hunting for his job, I also went upon the highway seeking what pupils I might devour. Instead of pupils, however, I found lots of other ravenous music teachers. Every town has quantities of them, just like doctors and lawyers.

There was one prosperous looking studio, in the very building in which I now am, in fact, to which I hied me to see if an assistant were needed. The teacher was giving a lesson when I arrived, and, mercy, what untold agonies I suffered listening to the horrible way she went about it. Such excruciating discords as reached my ears! And would you believe

it? — she actually lauded that little upstart murderer of one of Czerny's finest studies! I had been taught better than that. I could teach better than that. I knew that much before I ever began, and it gave me confidence. I wondered how she ever held her many pupils and was able to maintain so elaborate a studio if she always practised such methods.

Kenty, I have found out that secret of hers. It maddens me to write it, but I believe a great many piano teachers do the very same thing. A child is sent in for instruction, without any music in his makeup, one who could never under any circumstances become any kind of a pianist. She is expected to teach him and does the best she can, flattering him and his doting parent (usually his mother) along with his progress, which in nine cases out of ten he never makes with his

crude, careless, slide-over playing. And the mother's vanity is pleased. She would balk at the truth. Praise is what she is paying for — the praise of her offspring, deserved or undeserved, it doesn't matter. The child doesn't care. Why should he? Whatever he has done has always been bragged about before him. He's used to false credit. If his teacher doesn't pat him on the back and wheedle him along he'll tell his mother she's cross and another will be engaged. Can you blame the poor woman who must keep her pupils or go out of business for doing what is expected of her, even though she knows she is increasing the world's vast army of torturous tink-a-tinks?

I have noticed this to be true, especially among the upper classes who pay well for lessons. Of course every normal child does learn something; he can't help it

when his teacher takes so much pains. But when a wealthy child makes real progress and turns into a good musician, it is either through a natural love of, and ear for, music, or because he has a rare parent — one who has the real interest of the child at heart, and not her own colossal vanity; one who is not deceived, when her small boy stumbles through his piece at a recital, by the "How beautifully Algernon did" of the smirking mammas beside her.

I remember that once, only once, a real father (the kind you dream about for your own children) came to me with great concern about his boy and girl who had just started in with me the week before. "Miss Haliday," he began, "if either of my children have it in them to become good players, mind you, I don't say expert, but average intelligent performers

of refined home music, I shall be happy to have them continue under your care as long as they are in school. But if you find that their efforts are unnatural and forced, that it simply isn't in them, that they don't care whether they get ahead or not, why, I'm not going to put all my evenings in jeopardy by having to hear them bang ragtime and the stuff that most young folks play nowadays. I'd rather give you right now the price of their lessons than have them begin.

"Of course I'm not going to be so selfish as to ruin any real talent. I'm perfectly willing to put up the money if it's worth it; but I'd rather put it to some better use if it isn't. Those children have taken lessons all their lives, since they were nine," he continued. "It's torture to listen to Sylvia, at least for me, though I may lack the musical instinct, you know,

while Arthur — well, Arthur's pieces sound a little better, though I never heard him play one all through.

"Please give them each a fair trial and then report to me, at my office. We won't say anything about the matter to Mrs. Jones, that is, not at present. She might not understand. You know mothers — I suppose they're all alike. They always think their boys and girls are virtuosos in disguise. Now, Mrs. Jones has as much as told me that she considers Arthur a second Beethoven, because he can make up, what is it you call it — improvise, foolish little tunes with one finger. Later on my wife wants Sylvia to enter that great institution in the city where they turn out squads of ready-made, human pianolas; and she shall go, too, if it's in her. Between you and me, I don't think it is. In my opinion she'd punch the type-

writer with enough sight more expression!"

You may wonder at this long recital, but it has its place. That man is the only father I ever met who took any interest in the musical education of his family, outside of providing the money for their lessons. And he was so fair and square about it that his story ought to be heralded all over the world as a model for parents.

The children? Well, Mrs. Jones was right about Arthur. He was an infant prodigy. All he needed was some one to keep his nose to the technical grindstone. Mr. Jones was also right, for Sylvia hammered the keys as if she were driving nails through knotty wood. Her lessons were soon stopped to the chagrin of her mother and her own delight. For a whole year I received double payment for the boy's

lessons. Twice I sent the checks back, but they were returned with the words "I knew I could rely on you," so what could I do? I took extra pains with Arthur to even up. He is now my star pupil and will soon have to leave me for a more advanced teacher.

Patience, Kenty!

Let me see — I was sitting in that studio, wasn't I? Well, she thought she didn't require an assistant just then, but she might later. She taught all systems, letting each pupil who had taken lessons before go on in his own sweet way, whether it was an approved, up-to-date method or not. The method she used for beginners was an old-fashioned one. She hated beginners. Come to think of it, she guessed she would let me help her a little with a class of five, all of them under ten, who had just commenced. She charged

fifty cents an hour for these, and would allow me thirty-five. I was to come to the studio on Fridays, after school. Perhaps she might turn some extra pupils my way if she had more than she could attend to later on and I suited her. She was very kind and generous, I thought.

I went home rejoicing. Five pupils the very first day! The two school teacher boarders were in the living room when I was telling the folks about it that night. And, Kenty, those two dear girls told their classes about me and were the means of adding four more pupils a week to my tiny income. I charged seventy-five cents an hour for private lessons, just as the studio teacher did, though dad always had to pay a dollar for me in Maywood.

The next step was a neat little announcement in the town paper, so as to look business-like. Then I offered to

teach the four big girls for fifty cents apiece if they would each bring in a new pupil from among their schoolmates. Three of them did it.

As we have a piano with a beautiful tone, I saw no reason why my pupils shouldn't come to me, instead of my wasting time and fares by going to them. Our house is fairly central, and I really think the lesson turns out better if there are none of the child's family in the next room listening to mistakes. Little Marion Greenough, one of my most promising players, twisted around on the stool one day and confided to me: "I'm not nervous here, am I? I like to come to your house."

"Why, Marion? I am glad you do," I replied. "Are you ever nervous, a little girl like you?"

"Well," declared the child, "mamma

says I am. She always used to sit in the parlor when Professor Balch came to give me my lesson, and say: 'Poor little Marion, she can't help making more or less blunders. It's harder for her than for other children. She's so nervous! You must excuse her, Professor, I never saw such a nervous child in my life!'"

So I began by having them come to me, the seven private pupils. Of course I had to go to the studio for the little class, but it wasn't very far and I always walked.

The only expense I had was that advertisement, which for a long time I put in the classified column as it was so much cheaper, only twenty-five cents for three times.

As soon as my own work made it feasible I gave up assisting at the studio at cut rates, but that teacher found my beginners so much easier to go on with than her

own that she voluntarily turned over each fresh crop for the first two terms at full price, retaining the pupils at the end of the second term. But this didn't work for her, for the little rascals wanted to stay with me, so that, although we both had entered into that agreement in good faith, she lost all her new pupils that year. I didn't know what to do and offered all sorts of compromises, none of which she would accept, however.

Then the wonderful and unexpected happened. She came to see me one day, while I was puzzling and puzzling over the situation, and smiled as she said, with all the frankness in the world: "My lady, you're a better business woman and a better teacher than I am. You have most of my pupils, now won't you please take the studio? I should feel relieved, as the contract isn't up until next December.

After that you can stay there or not, as you choose, but wouldn't it be better to keep the business where it has always been?"

"W-w-why, why are you doing this?" I stammered.

"Just sick of it, and going to marry Professor Balch," she blushed, explaining that he didn't want her pupils anyway, as he already was overburdened with higher priced ones.

So here I am to-day, nicely established, though I've gone all around Jack Robinson's barn to tell you so. I lay my success partially to great luck, but primarily to my painstaking way of making the child take pains; and to my telling the parent about the possibilities, as I see them, in the child, thus inspiring confidence, and retaining only such as have some material to work with in themselves. Where I

sacrifice on one I make up with another. Don't think I take only prodigies; no indeed! But I won't take pay for work which I know is all thrown away, at least, not unless the parent understands the true state of affairs and still insists. Nor do I give a recital that I am ashamed of. Children do not have to play at my recitals — they want to. There is nothing compulsory about it. It's an honor to be attained only by excellent every-day work. Therefore, when I give one it is a success.

I still practise myself. If I didn't some of the more advanced pupils would soon leave me way behind in technique. Needless to say, I don't teach trashy, meretricious music, nor do I permit a beginner to execute an old master just because her mother is fond of such and such a selection.

You are doubtless saying to yourself,

"Of course not! Nobody would do such foolish things." But they do, Kenty, lots of them. They spoil many a lazy boy and girl by letting them glide over the sticky places with something which, to the unpractised ear, may sound just as well. Don't you remember how furious Miss Bangsky used to get when we played by ear?

I am coming to you, now, Kenty. I hope you will leave vocal alone, unless, well, unless you have improved a very great deal since the time we all used to screech in the Glee Club. Not that you didn't warble like a bird; you did. But it takes a marvellous warble to catch fat worms!

My experience tells me to tell you that if you love music beyond anything to go ahead and teach it. I am comfortably situated and really doing more than I

should, so why don't you come to live with us? There would be plenty of room, for we don't have to take boarders now, and I should just love your company. I was always dying to have a sister, so come on, little Kenty.

You studied the same method which I now teach, and if you're a trifle out of practise you can make it up. You could help me somewhat, and then by degrees work up some pupils of your own there in Maywood for one day a week, maybe, and, oh, I'll help collect them.

If, however, you're grown away from the piano and don't care about it the way you used to, I would rather see you do almost anything else than try to get and keep pupils.

Think it over and consult our old teacher if she is still extant, which of course, you can't do if she isn't. You will

need stacks of patience, a head like a sponge so that you can absorb and squeeze out the sound, and a system of nerve-cells strong enough to run a biplane.

Far be it from me to induce you to start out on any wild goose chase which would be only a waste of time. You have studied music. You ought to be in the best position to judge of your own inclination and ability. If you're not so terribly advanced yourself, never mind. You've been all through theory and harmony, and the trick is not to perform perfectly yourself but to be able to show some one else how to do so.

You are mighty fortunate to have grown up with some musical education, and to have had so good a teacher as ours was. Just think how much money and how long a time it would take to prepare

a girl, who had never studied, to be any kind of a teacher of music, if she suddenly decided after leaving school that that was her vocation. Lots of girls, brought up as you and I were, never put their musical advantages to any use, beyond accompanying themselves at home.

And there's another thing which I nearly forgot — accompanying. Have you ever done any for entertainments? I put a line about it in my advertisement, but don't get very much of it. Occasionally an evening brings in three or five dollars, but I am more often asked to do it for love.

I have spent so much of my Sunday writing to you that no ribbons get run in to-day, and not a single button gets annexed. It is 'most time for the girls to drop in for a cup of tea, as they often do, especially now that the folks are away on

a little holiday trip and I'm practically living in the studio. I wish you could take a peek in here. It's like a dream that lasts after you wake up. You must come to visit, anyway, whether or not you join the metronome existence and learn to live by rote.

Kenty, I am older than you, and nothing like a love affair has ever had time to creep in between my lessons. But, if I were you, I should be tempted to let T. S. seize the staff and seek out the notes, while I played only the rests. A solo is all right, I've played it; but it can't compare to a duet when the heart strings are in perfect tune.

Those women who know, the mothers of the world, tell us that there is no music like the first cry of a baby voice, the dominant chord in any musical life, which subdues even the finest symphonies of the

grand old composers into the faintest accompaniments.

Having worked up to this terrific crescendo, I will now ritard, still being

Yours as in the happy, sing-song days,

WINIFRED STONE HALIDAY.

JANE HAS DEADOODLES OF PATIENTS

Out on a case in Milton, Mass.

My Poor Dear Child:

It's nearly midnight, and I am writing you by the dim flickerings of a gas-jet turned way down, brightened by pale flashes of moonlight streaming in at the window.

My patient is asleep, at last. Oh, I am so thankful, for it will mean the saving of him. Pneumonia, my dear, and an obstinate, treacherous case.

I am not the regular nurse. She, plucky little thing, stood at her post four days and three nights running, before I was called to relieve her.

I was just putting on my hat to go to the theatre with my sister this evening — and the tickets were a Christmas present, too — when the call came. The play will be gone when I get off this case — just my luck! But never mind, it's all a part of being a nurse.

You ought to have seen this family when I arrived. It just happened that the crisis passed and a turn for the better set in after I had been on duty half an hour. Coincident, of course, but they all seem to connect me with it, somehow or other.

A few hours ago I went in to ask the regular nurse a question about some medicine, just as she was undressing to crawl into bed after her long vigil. She put her exhausted little head on my shoulder and actually wept because I had come — that alone made up for a dozen performances. If this case is as successful as it now bids fair to be, the credit will all belong to her brave fight — hers and, of course and always, the doctor's.

One of my eyes is glued to the bed and the other is vainly trying to follow the faint traceries of my fountain pen. But my heart is all with you to-night. Were you here, I should put my arms around you and give you a mammoth hug, which would tell you many things I dare not after your instructions.

My dear, if you want a life-work, nursing is the most satisfying thing in the

world. To relieve physical torture, to soothe mental suffering, to watch the joy each little life ushered into being brings to its mother, to ease the path for those whose last hours are come — oh, there's nothing can compare with it! What other greeting ever uttered stirs your heart like the trust and confidence conveyed in the "Oh, I'm so glad you've come" welcome into the sick room? There is none.

But this isn't advising you. Nor can I, dear child. I can merely suggest to you what has suited me. You must advise yourself.

You've doubtless heard the expression, "she's a born-nurse." I suppose some nurses are "born," just as there seem to be predestined painters, poets, and singers; but I believe the art of nursing can be acquired by any one with the

necessary physical strength and love for it.

To succeed, you must love it. Liking, merely, won't do — there must be the sustaining love of it. Ask yourself most carefully about this, or you'll be a sorry failure. A person might be a good bookkeeper and yet hate his work; but heart and soul have to accompany uniform and cap.

There isn't so much sacrifice to it as people seem to imagine, for the duties entail so-called sacrifice, which then becomes regular work. All work has its sacrifices. In ours, the compensation more than makes up, and I don't mean financial compensation either, though we get our share of that. You can't be lazy. You must have courage, heaps of it, and endurance.

Don't let the supposed horrors of nursing scare you out of it, if you really desire

to enter the profession. They adjust themselves, and after a little while you'll find yourself discussing major " ops " with perfect equanimity.

Well I remember, when I was a probationer, hearing an old man in the charity ward beg for water all of one night. He had a perforated stomach, and I was just allowed to moisten his lips a little. He couldn't have even a swallow. He died in torment, and his pitiful groans haunted me for many a day.

One of the first things a nurse learns is that there is no time to give way to her own feelings. The patient demands all her attention. Little by little the sight of a broken leg instigates her to help, rather than unnerves her with useless, hand-wringing sympathy. She doesn't grow hard. A true nurse is never callous to suffering, but she controls her emotions

and does her work instead of being conquered by false sympathy.

Faint? You may at first — every one does. You'll get over it. There's nothing about nursing you can't stand, unless, perhaps, the night work.

The first step for you to take is to go to your family physician and ask him if you are strong enough to become a nurse. I did. If he says for you not to think of such a thing, turn your thoughts towards some other kind of work. This is very important, and may save you the waste of time and gruesomeness of having to begin all over again. If you have set your heart on it, and think your own doctor prejudiced, go to a strange physician for an unbiassed opinion. Then if you're told to go ahead, assured that you can stand it, you have every chance in the world to be another Florence Nightingale.

You must be trained. An untrained nurse has no place at all nowadays. There is everything in favor of the trained nurse. Even the standard of her salary is protected from the competition of the untrained by law in some of our states. She is never out of employment, except when she takes time off for rest, for the demand is greater than the supply. There aren't many kinds of business where a person may stop work whenever she wishes and then begin again at the same salary. After graduation a nurse doesn't have to worry about getting cases. Her hospital helps her.

When you get to be a full-fledged nurse, your weekly stipend will be between twenty-one and twenty-five dollars, including all expenses. If you enjoy the institutional side of nursing, you may become a head nurse in your own hospital;

or, perhaps, you may be executive enough to aspire to a matronship. At any rate, you'll be called to all the cases you'll wish to handle. I have had deadoodles of patients since I graduated.

There are some hospitals whose alumnae pension their graduates after they have passed in their checks for usefulness. Better inquire about this, wherever you apply.

I took a three years' course in a small hospital, which I believe to be the best possible training school. Here the dozen or so nurses had to attend to every conceivable kind of human ailment, which gave us all kinds of experience. Then we were right under the nose of our matron all the time, and I doubt if the discipline could have been more severe.

Some of our graduating class went immediately to a large city hospital for a

post-graduate year to finish their training. I fully intend to go myself next year, but felt the need of earning some money to replenish my wardrobe first, and also wanted the rest afforded between cases, which will make it easier to take up the somewhat arduous routine life again. So for two years I've nursed and laid off and saved, and now am all ready to enter one of the biggest hospitals in New York next fall. I have never regretted one moment given to my training and shall feel quite complete after the post course.

To go back to my first matron. We girls used to call her the ogress. (Now I realize what a wonder she was.) We would tremble at the pitter-patter of her rubber heels!

I shall never forget one night about seven-thirty, when the telephone of the nurses' home rang and every day-nurse

was summoned to the super's office. It had been a terribly trying day and I had just scrambled into bed as soon as I had swallowed my supper and was almost asleep. I had to hustle into my clothes and report with the rest. The charge was that an interne, whose life we all made miserable ever after, had discovered a burned match on one of the corridor floors! What villain had dropped it? Not I, luckily, but, nevertheless, I was taught what a dreadful calamity might have resulted from such carelessness. "The whole building might have caught fire, and the patients might not all have been moved. Whoever dropped that match would have been a murderess!" she raved, anticlimaxing from manslaughter to the crimes of arson and criminal negligence. We all filed out, feeling the guilty things we weren't. The sequel was that never

can I remember of such a thing occurring afterwards.

Other equally bad things did, however. Once a probationer left a soiled spoon on one of the tables in the ward. Again we all appeared for the inquest, also after duty hours, when it was discovered. Every time any one did anything wrong, we all got the benefit of it. That's why our class all became star nurses — thanks to the ogress.

Your home environment, good education and natural refinement will go a long way toward making you a successful nurse. The very first thing I was taught to do was house-work, cleaning, thorough bed-making, and the proper manner to set up a dainty tray. Then, of course, we all went to a cooking school. You've had experience in all these things, which were a handicap to me. Some of the proba-

tioners are so slovenly and clumsy. You'd be a dabster. It means so much to have your patient's room immaculate, as well as his person. A sloppy tray is a crime in any hospital, and — would you believe it? — there isn't one girl out of ten who knows how to make plain toast that is appetizing!

Our hospital paid six dollars a month the first year, eight dollars the second, and nine dollars the third. Each beginner was given the material for three uniforms, after which she had to provide her own. Perhaps you could make yours, which would save a dressmaker. I did. We each had to have a watch and rubber heels. I'm proud to tell you that I saved enough out of my salary to buy me a solid gold watch the first eighteen months. Before that I borrowed a broken one belonging to the family and had it fixed up.

It was unsightly and big as a turnip. My, wasn't it a relief to get the new one!

All your other necessary expenses are paid: board, good food, though plain; warm room in the nurses' home, which is a sort of little club in a small hospital; and washing. Just a word about that washing — you'll need the strongest kind of underwear to stand the hospital wash, and better make it plain or you'll be forever mending.

If you should enter a city hospital, I'm afraid you'd be a bit lonely — our girls were like one big family. Then, too, remember you'd need more money for car-fares and extras, and earn barely enough for your boots and uniforms, aprons and bibs.

You are old enough to enter as you're over twenty-one, the age usually required.

It's now January, and none too early,

if early enough, to register. You'd better inquire of two or three doctors about the best training school in your vicinity, and write for an application blank. Most classes enter in the fall, so you have plenty of time to repair your clothes and get ready, even though you do some other work in the meantime.

Of course, different hospitals have different requirements and length of courses. What I've told you has come mainly from my personal experience.

The dawn is beginning to break. So is my wrist! That blessed man is still asleep, which means this case will be a short one for me.

Hoping you may gather a faint idea from this tangled and incoherent labyrinth, I thank you for helping me while away the long night. Most lovingly,

JANE.

P. S. For the gist of a woman's letter, look to the P. S. My dear, my patient is stirring — don't do it — marry Tad. I mean, don't be a nurse — not, don't marry Tad.

J.

PEGGY IS JUST A TIRED MACHINE

Miss Joy Kent, *Jan. 3.*
25 Linden Road, Maywood, Mass.

My Dear Joy:

Your esteemed favor of the 1st instant received. Pardon this formal beginning of my letter, but when you've been esteeming favors for half a dozen years you'll see how easy it is to fall into the vernacular.

So you long to go to work. Somehow, I can't bear to think of your turning into a machine like me. And yet stenography is the easiest way. Also the quickest.

Don't think for a moment of trying to earn your living by your voice. You'd starve to death! Not that I wish to disparage — but listen to what I went through. No, you never knew it, perhaps, but I spent seven, weary, discouraging months trying to get a sufficient number of music pupils together to pay for my voice lessons plus bread and butter, and, honestly, with all my conservatory training, I couldn't land enough for either. It was a terrible blow to me when my "career" turned into a course in stenography. But, then, I had bread and butter and a little honey to fill my hungry soul.

You sing well. So do hundreds of other girls. But it's only the rare geniuses who

get by nowadays and turn their notes into the kind that will cash. Better give it up, Joy, as I had to, only do it now, before the heartache sets in. Oh, the time and money I've wasted in trying to become a prima donna because my well-meaning friends flattered me into thinking I had a voice! A girl with remarkable talent and a financial backer might pull it off. Otherwise, she'd better make music her hobby and not her business. There, that's honest, and it wasn't easy to write, understanding how you will feel if you love it as I do.

Stenography sounds prosaic beside the songbird's dream. But it's stable. For the time necessary to its preparation it pays better than anything else I know of for women.

There's satisfaction in it too, not only in the neatly transcribed sheets, which say

as plainly as possible, "You can rely absolutely on me;" but in realizing that you are a necessary factor in your employer's business. A trusted stenographer who sacredly guards the secrets of her office is an invaluable asset. And this is the first law of business for any girl in any office — to keep what she knows about her employer's affairs to herself. Go into any middle-class restaurant at the noon hour and you will be amazed to hear the open betrayal of business faith gossiped from one group to another. But they get found out, and that's one reason why many stay down in the inferior positions.

"I'm sick of being a sieve for another's brains," cried a girl in a large concern where there were eight typists. So she threw up her machine and started in to use her own brains. And then found she didn't have any, at least, she wasn't crea-

tive enough to exploit her "artistic temperament," as she called it. After ten days she tried to get her job back, but it was filled. Which all means, let the geniuses soar if they can, but the stenographer, with both feet on the first round of the ladder of success, had better climb slowly than step off into space.

It's not all roses — office work — and many a night I go home too tired to do anything but crawl into bed. A long stretch at the typewriter always makes a horrible achey feeling in the back of my neck, and our poor little bookkeeper complains of chronic backache from sitting all day on a high stool. But think how a store girl has to stand, and a nurse and a teacher, too. All work produces its aches. I thought my eyes would pop right out of my head when I first began to study stenography, but after a little practice

they got used to following the queer, shaded curlicues.

(Had to take this letter out of the machine as the head of the firm called me for dictation. Five carbon copies! If this sounds jerky, remember that it is written piecemeal.)

Where was I — oh, yes, you want to know how to begin. If you haven't any special "bent" except music, I would certainly advise you to take up stenography. First of all make up your mind that you are going to succeed — yes, you are, even in your most discouraged moments, while trying to master the miserable "hooks." Just look around you at the dummies who are thumping the keys and holding down their jobs. You can if they can, and you can't help it.

Overcrowded? Not a bit of it. There are thousands of mediocre dictation-takers

eking out a pitiful living, — which, even then, is usually more than they are worth — but there are plenty of vacancies waiting for high-class, common-sense, accurate, trustworthy girls, who are few and far between.

A teacher in one of the leading business colleges in a certain city took a friend of mine over the school. At one open door, he paused and said: "See this whole roomful of graduates? There are over fifty ready for positions next June." "But where do you place so many?" asked my friend. "That's easy enough," replied the teacher, "there are always more applications than we can fill. The trouble is, that though all these are up in speed and the other school requirements, there aren't more than two in the whole lot who know enough to think! Just machines, nothing more."

Now, those fortunate two will probably become private secretaries, which means that their lives won't be all grind, for a private secretary does many things besides stenography, just as a social secretary does. I know one girl who is in a doctor's office. She doesn't have very much dictation, but has learned to assist in the examination of sputum, and does many similar things to save the doctor's busy time. Helen Smith, a girl who used to work in the same building with me, is now travelling all around the country with a woman writer. She went to Europe last summer. Think of it! Then there's Ruth Snow of New York. She earns thirty dollars a week in a publishing house. The girls in government positions also receive good salaries after they've been at it a while. Of course, they have to pass civil service examinations. I know of one girl

in the State House who makes twenty-five a week. So, you see, there are some really-truly plums hanging on the sugar tree, and there are more all ripe and waiting.

There are two classes of stenographers: the kind who have to do letters over again and the kind who don't. And there are two ways of taking dictation: one is to let the matter run through you like a sieve (honestly, when I'm tired I can jot down thousands of words, without realizing or remembering a thing I am writing, and yet transcribe them all perfectly). The better way is to comprehend what you are about and take an interest in it. Then when your employer asks you about this or that, you will be able to refer to it immediately. The "machine" method may do for stereotyped work, but the "thinking machine" is the one to arrive.

(Intermission for you and more dictation for me.)

It's all over — another legal brief. Law work is terribly exacting. I put in all my "dots" as I don't dare to risk guessing at them. Woe unto her who writes an "a" dot for a "the" dot, even when either makes perfect sense. And yet I am advising you to become a stenographer!

I've heard that no one is indispensable in business and that any one's place could be filled at a day's notice; but, though it may sound conceited, I don't think mine could. Why, if I stay out a single day they say they have a terrible time of it here in the office, and you ought to see what there is to straighten out when I come back. So I try never to be absent by taking every possible care of my health. It's so satisfying to be needed.

Probably you've heard a lot about the

big money court reporters make; they do, sometimes ten dollars a day. But they have to be as rapid as lightning, and it tells upon them in time, the strain. They don't last very long unless they're made of iron; at least, women don't. I know a man who's been at it for years and he's grown rich.

Some public stenographers do mighty well by hiring a small office or desk room in some hotel or business building and working for transients. Often they get up quite a little clientage, as you might call it, and make fabulous sums. But it's too irregular for a beginner and requires an experienced, executive person for real success.

Undoubtedly the best way to learn stenography and typewriting is to go to a reliable school, where the preparation is thorough and the class-work keeps away

the discouragement of slow progress which often accompanies studying alone. Then there's the advantage of being able to say that you're a graduate of such and such a school, which helps you in getting a job.

All the high schools are teaching business courses. Isn't it a pity you didn't learn it there, when you had the chance; but, of course, that doesn't help any now.

Then there are night schools in all the large cities, where many a tired girl who has worked all day at a counter tries to better her position by learning a more paying trade. This is a terribly hard way, but a possible one. I hope you won't be so independent as to try to meet your tuition in this manner.

Now I have a scheme to propose to you. Take it or leave it, but don't get hurt. I know of a private school, run by an expert

stenographer, where pupils can enter at any time of the year and receive practically private instruction, though they have some class-work too. One of the four girls who lives in our flat went there. And she got her first job in three months. If she could, you could. She claims that one girl got through in one month, and secured a little cheap position for five dollars a week where she stayed until her speed increased sufficiently to warrant more pay. The big schools require six, eight, ten months, sometimes more or less, according to the aptitude and education of the pupil. Some of them have a fall entering class, others admit beginners all through the year.

But enter somewhere, you must, and I advise the small private school for one of your age and schooling, starting in the middle of the year. You won't need the

courses in English, spelling, etc., which take up so much time in the large business colleges.

Now I put a certain sum in the savings bank every week. It is a principle with me. I receive three and one-half per cent. interest. I am looking for a safe investment and you look good to me. Will you permit me to advance you your necessary tuition at four per cent.? It will benefit us both. The longer it takes you to return it, the better off I am. And, believe me, you will be able to repay it and be wholly out of debt and on your feet far quicker than if you try the work-all-day-study-all-night racket. Think it over, and remember it's an investment on my part. And I shall be a regular Shylock!

Here are a few suggestions I want to impress upon you right now: Any good-for-nothing can take dictation (and

rapidly, too). But it takes a good-for-something to read it back accurately. Hence, begin by never writing a single character you can't read readily. Don't puzzle too long — stop and look up that doubtful word — then go on. Speed comes naturally. Don't force it.

Better learn touch typewriting, which is almost universally taught in the best schools. The sight writers often gain as great speed, but the constant changing of eye focus is exhausting. Be patient. Practise. Don't give up. And you'll get there.

Did I ever tell you how I happen to be where I am? Well, it was through an ad., and, say, a word about answering an advertisement mightn't be out of place. Some months ago I needed an assistant and the firm put an ad. in the papers. We had approximately a thousand replies,

which I had to look over and select the most likely. They were cautions! Such writing, such spelling, such portrayal of family affairs, and accomplishments of no value to a prospective stenographer! Only a few stated what they could do, and most of them were so condescending and patronizing that they were passed over.

To answer a newspaper advertisement (and beware of the snides) tell briefly and legibly who you are, what you can do, whether or not you live with your parents, state your education and experience, and give three references, preferably the names of some former employers, if any. I gave the names of my school superintendent, high school principal and the first man I worked for. Ministers don't count much in the business world. Also state if you are strong. Don't begin by asking about

the hours, or the salary, either. Offer your goods and then let them name their price, which you can discuss later. If you can make your letter a bit original, still sticking wholly to business, you'll stand twice the chance of getting it looked into. It is business-like to enclose an addressed and stamped envelope. A letter speaks volumes for the sender — its neatness, accuracy, and clear, straightforward statement. Probably you know all this, but don't take it amiss from one who has been surprised to find out how many highly educated girls don't know how to compose a simple letter of application.

From the hundreds of girls who responded to the same advertisement that I did, thirty were selected for an interview. And they chose me — think what a dreadful twenty-nine the others must have been! When I applied in person, the head

of the firm was looking over two of the thirty possibilities. The door was open between the inner and outer offices, so that I couldn't help hearing all that passed. And I'm not as ashamed as perhaps I ought to be to admit that I listened with all my ears.

Said she, proudly: "I'm a graduate of Swellsley College."

Replied the man: "Well, that doesn't hurt you particularly."

Continued the supercilious lady: "If you are anxious to have culture and refinement brought into your office I think I would like to come, but if you're looking for a mere stenographer and typist, I'm afraid I wouldn't do as I don't know either and would prefer to be just your confidential, private secretary."

And that highly polished, fine-minded gentleman stood up and admitted that his

office undoubtedly did need "culture and refinement," but he was afraid he'd have to get along without them rather than the worker he needed. He showed her out, bowed in the next applicant, with a sort of mad look on his face which changed to amusement as he caught sight of me, smiling in my corner at the impudence.

The poor little thing who came next had no chance at all. She couldn't even speak correct English — how then could she expect to write it from the meshes of dictation? Upholstered like a piece of furniture, she wore frowzy puffs, monstrous heels worn way down and holey gloves. The allurement of her stiff, white, high-collared, peek-a-boo waist couldn't make up for the rest — the vulgar skirt, the huge, brass belt-buckle and loud hat. Besides, the poor child was actually chewing gum! I've since wondered who wrote

her letter of application, which was a fair specimen.

As for me, I've been here three years and am likely to remain during the rest of my usefulness. I do my best and the firm shows that it is appreciated.

Every one has deserted the building and I must go home for it's after seven. I had to come back after supper, anyway, to finish up some work. Whatever you decide, count on me.

Faithfully always,

PEGGY.

P. S. Before sealing this let me add that, after all, I believe even the dishpan is more attractive than the typewriter, provided it's your own dishpan. Why don't you marry him? Don't be like me, a very tired

MACHINE.

SALLY RECEIVES A SIGNAL OF DISTRESS

Emerald Lake, Vt., Jan. 5.

To Miss Joy Kent,
Maywood, Mass.

Tickled to death to hear from you. Was so glad came near sending telegram. Fear wires would be hot all night if I started in to say my say that way. Great compliment to have you ask advice of me.

You remember that page about Morse in our American history books, and the first telegram that was ever sent being "What hath God wrought?"—a girl sent that, a seventeen-year-old girl, named Annie Ellsworth. And girls have been doing it ever since.

You might do something a great deal worse than become a telegrapher. It is intensely exciting, knowing about every one's business before any one else. Only trouble is you have to emulate the clam. It is against the ethics to squeal, and besides you'd lose your job if you got caught at it.

One great advantage is that you don't have to know anything. You'd probably make a dandy operator. Don't mean that you don't know anything, exactly, but it isn't necessary to be a college graduate, or anything like that. I only went

through grammar school, you know. If you are ever vigilant and attentive and can write legibly and spell "phthisic" and know the cities in your geography and enough to do as you're told — that's all you'll need to know.

You must be awfully discouraged to think of consulting me, but don't let the future frighten you. Look into your heart and see what kind of work appeals to you, and if you don't find anything especially appealing, and decide you really haven't any talent whatsoever (I can't judge about your voice, not knowing much about music), then you're just like me and aren't fit for anything! You've got to choose between being a clerk or a bookkeeper or a stenographer or a telephone girl or something of that order, and I think telegraphy about as good as anything.

I thought I had forgotten how to create a long sentence. It seems so good to be filling in the "the's." I transmit so much ten-word jerk stuff, that I must sound like that fellow in Dickens, what's his name, Jingle, Alfred Jingle, whose little sputtering, broken phrases I read up in the mountains summer before last.

Maybe you didn't know that I spend my summers in the swellest resorts there are, sometimes at the sea-shore, sometimes in the mountains. Well, I do. Last year, until late in the fall, I was operator at the Eagle Cliff Hotel, and had my board and keep like the best of the guests, as well as a pay envelope of which no one need be ashamed. The same company that runs this Inn at Emerald Lake also runs several all-the-year-round hotels in some of our largest cities. I get transferred from the city, when I can, in the warm weather;

and I usually make it. The Inn is being kept open all winter this year as an experiment, so I'm staying right on.

You can't get this kind of a job right away. I should say not! I didn't. I began in one of the big central offices of the Western Union. They called me a check girl. I got four dollars! Some start as high as seven, but they are older than I was. I was only sixteen.

After they've learned the business girls may stretch their worth anywhere from eight or ten to twelve, fifteen or even eighteen dollars. Men don't earn much more; twenty-two to twenty-five is about their limit for good everyday telegraphers. Overtime work adds to this, of course.

Where I learned to operate the beginners spent several hours each day in a class room at the instrument. Here, too, we had to practise our penmanship and

spelling, and become acquainted with the typewriter. I always take my messages on the machine, as do most of the up-to-date operators.

Let me see, you'll want to know how long it took me before I was sure of myself. Eight months, though some of the older pupils got through in six and got jobs.

It was a good while before I could get over having palpitation every time I heard financial and commercial messages full of mathematical and technical terms, of many of which I was entirely ignorant.

There are all sorts of things to be mastered besides the code, you know, abbreviations, cipher messages, cablegrams, franked messages, weather reports, railroad signals, time by telegraph, train schedules, accident and weather reports, night service, stock reports and quota-

tions, C. N. D.'s, and details "too numerous to mention," as they say of auction lists. Some of these you may never be called upon to use, but you are taught to know how, should occasion arise; and also given a course in branch office management.

Then you should understand something about testing wires, and the care of instruments, the key, sounder and relay, batteries and switchboards.

It's lots harder to receive than to send, at first. You get used to the little tick-tick-a-tick after a while, though, and it becomes second nature. I'm not afraid of transmitting or receiving anything now, because I began by being as careful as I knew how to be with every message and I believe it has helped wonderfully.

Practice counts more in this business than anything else; practice and careful

attention. You must be accurate. A sloberly (excuse that vulgar sounding word, but it's just what I mean) a sloberly operator never gets anywhere. Rapidity comes in time. You must be just keyed up to a message when it comes and tend strictly to business. No guess work here!

Mistakes are fatal. They are considered inexcusable, especially when reports are read back, as all messages should be if important.

People want to receive telegrams which can be read with some sense to their wording. So it's up to the operator to dot her "I's" and cross her "T's" and mind her "P's" and "Q's!"

I remember one telegram which cost a young man his position, and rightly, too. A school-girl had disappeared, run away, and her distracted parents were searching the country for her. She had gone to visit

a cousin, who immediately sent on the message: "Grace is down with us." The operator at the home office wrote: "Grace is dead with us!" I could run on forever with similar instances.

People tell me they should think I'd have nervous prostration, but I tell them it isn't nearly so bad as being a "hello" girl with a receiver glued to my ear all the time. And it's a deal more interesting than plugging in connections from morning till night in dizzy succession. When I hear telegraphy called monotonous, I conclude that the speaker knows very little about it, and wonder what he'd think of pegging it on a high stool and keeping books.

In the office where I began to study there was the strictest kind of a supervisor. We had to conform to the rules about being prompt and neat in appear-

ance, and not a speck of funny business was tolerated for a moment. I'm glad now that he was an old bear, that supervisor. His cubs were well brought up.

As to jobs, there are plenty of them waiting for the competent: Western Union, Postal Telegraph-Cable, railroads, private lines in hotels, brokerage offices, and government positions.

So if you can't do anything famous, do as I do and be a messenger to the public. Some day, who knows, an earthquake or a flood or a wreck may give you a chance for eternal fame by letting you send, "This is my last message," before it kills you!

It's a worthy occupation which any girl with a fair knowledge of the three "R's" and the ghost of a New England conscience can master.

Hearing all the news and being obliged

to suppress it to all except the parties concerned, we telegraphers become a kind of silent gossips, and sometimes it's pretty hard to keep our lips tightly closed about some choice, spicy bit of information, especially for us girls. Mum's the word. If you can make your tongue live up to it, don't be afraid to tackle the code.

I have given you only a brief dispatch on the subject of telegraphy, and do hope it won't sound like cipher to you.

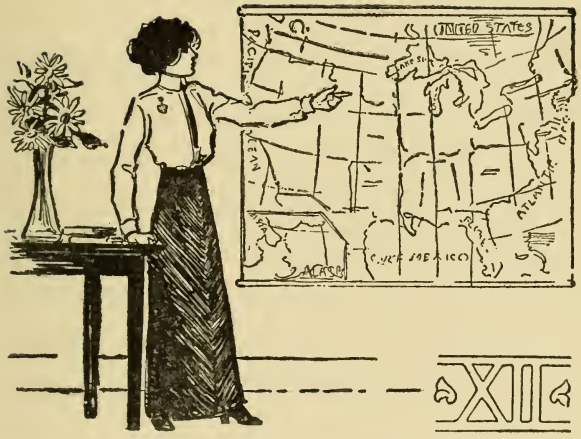
By the way, there's a dandy young woman in the library here. She picks out all my reading matter for me, and I have become quite intimate with her since I came to the Lake. I trust I didn't get my wires crossed when I took the liberty of asking her to write you about her work, in case mine doesn't interest you. She promised to send you a whole catalogue of data. Did she?

Wireless is the ambition of my life. I am studying it every chance I get, and can now receive quite well. I caught a wireless message from, — may I call him Tad? — last night. It was the signal of distress!

But there, you know best which wires to pull. Do what you will, but remember that I am yours

Co-operatively,

SALLY SAUNDERS.



XII

BETTY DREADS THE BIDDY LOOK

Washington School, Riverton, N. Y.
After School.

DEAR FAR-AWAY JOY:

My last little wriggler has departed, and now, if you'll accompany me into the dressing room, we'll have a serious talk.

Your frame of mind, judging from your

letter, assures me that you are just ripe for work, and I believe you will derive much happiness from whatever vocation you follow.

Knowing you, as I do, I should say that teaching offered the best field, by all means. (Please remember that it requires some enthusiasm to say this at the close of the first day after vacation, when the children, having had two weeks' freedom, fight like wild creatures at the attempt to put them back into bondage. To-morrow, though, they will be like lambs.)

It takes still more enthusiasm to recommend the art of pedagogy when I behold my unbalanced register, a not-yet-made-up plan-book, the delinquent report cards, and a pile of uncorrected work of to-day staring me in the face. All these details have to be attended to out of school hours,

and yet some people claim that a teacher has such an easy time of it, only working from nine to four, with two hours at noon-time! Only a part of her duty is over when the pupils file out. Then she must begin on the next day's program, finish up the present one, and wind up the rods upon rods of red tape which apparently are indispensable to the school requirements of to-day.

However, in spite of its worries, I couldn't bring myself to do anything else. I love to teach. The pleasure I take in my work is my real reason for endorsing it for you.

There are other considerations: Without wishing to be snobbish, exactly, it can't be denied that the school-teacher is held in higher esteem by society — has more caste, so to speak, than most women wage-earners. She is looked up to and

given recognition wherever she goes. Personally, I believe any self-supporting girl is entitled to the same place in the world's regard, but you'll find it takes a pretty high-grade stenographer, for instance, to be received where a schoolmarm is welcomed. I'm not praising the profession because it's "genteel," as grandmama would say, but it is "genteel," nevertheless.

If you possess the innate love of teaching, you're bound to do it anyway. If you inculcate it, there are innumerable advantages. Among them, spare time. Not in the actual number of hours of the regular school day, on account of the before-and-after session duties, and, often, night work, as I've just mentioned. But she has her Saturdays free to herself, and who else in the working world can claim so much time? Then, too, the fact that if she's not

feeling quite up to the mark she can go directly home after the closing hour means a lot. I often think that the poor girls chained to their posts from seven and eight in the morning until six at night would appreciate it. Coupled with this, most schools allow a teacher a week or ten days' (sometimes longer) leave of absence for sickness, and she doesn't get docked, either, though a substitute usually gets two-thirds of her pay.

Folks cant about our vacations. They give us lots of time for rest and opportunity to travel and enjoy our own pursuits, it is true. But they don't bring in any money, and yet we have to live, which means that we must save enough from our meagre salaries to tide us over. Many a teacher with some one dependent upon her has to work through her vacations, and many more take up sum-

mer courses to try to better their efficiency.

But given caste and an extra amount of spare time for our own hobbies, two mighty assets are recorded right here in themselves.

Besides these, the pensioning of the faithful grown old in the service is not to be sneered at by those who would enter the field. Little do many young teachers realize that their entire lives may be consecrated to enlightening their annual broods. I sigh every time the probability comes over me that my first class is on its way to manhood and womanhood, when it will soon leave school, go out into the world, get married and send back its children to me, still in the ranks. But along with the wrinkles and white hair of that not too distant day, it is comforting to think of the possible pension — just like a

worn-out soldier, disabled for the fray. Of course, all cities and towns do not have pension funds, but the time is coming when they will.

Nor should I be ruminating about "old soldiers" when a raw recruit is saluting me.

Joy, your present position reminds me painfully of how I began teaching. You remember I had to leave school the middle of my senior year and go to work. Like you, I hadn't the slightest idea of what to do or how to do it, but I'd made up my mind that mother shouldn't support a great girl like me any longer. She begged me to finish out the year, and afterwards I wished I had. It's not easy to begin teaching when you have to admit that you haven't even a high school diploma!

I went the rounds of all the teachers'

agencies in the city — there are several reliable ones in every large city — to see if I could get a country school.

Never since have I undergone so discouraging a day. Oh, wasn't it cold, tramping from one agency to another, waiting my turn, and always hearing the same things — what I lacked in training and experience. I had no dinner that day — it was hard enough for mother to spare me car fare to and from home.

Each agency informed me promptly that the registration dues, usually two or three dollars, were required in advance. When I replied that I hadn't sufficient money with me, I was handed a blank form to take home and fill out and mail back to them.

What normal school had I graduated from? Had I ever taught before? If so, what was my experience? they asked

stereotypedly. To which, with sinking heart, I had to falter, " None."

They said I was pretty young, that I'd better spend a couple of years at a free normal, and then if I'd come in again they'd give me a good school. Young? How I realized it! Normal school? How I should have loved to go. But the necessity of my getting my own living — they didn't seem to understand that. Nor did they know that my mother was trying to keep her fatherless family together with her needle and that rheumatism was crippling her frail little faithful fingers.

Everywhere it was the same. My spirits had fallen way down into my boots.

Then I met a man with a heart, and in one of those blood-sucking agencies, too, the smallest of them all, which I had purposely left until last. He also began on

advance registration fees and normal school, while I sank into a chair and silently wondered if there were any use in listening to what I failed in all over again. The man stopped abruptly, and I caught him scrutinizing me as I looked up. I fancied he discovered that my shoes were thin and that my gloves were shabby, though I curled up my fingers to hide it as much as possible.

Then, somehow or other, he got it all out of me: where I lived, why I had left school, all about mother, how I stood in school, and all sorts of things I never thought to tell any one. He also asked the name of my superintendent, and he was kind, oh, so kind. His solid advice has been a factor in my life ever since, and to him, in a large measure, I owe what success has been mine.

He told me of a district school in the

wilds of Vermont, which was without a teacher. He couldn't promise me anything definite, but made me leave him three references so he could look me up. The best I had to look forward to was that the school was so far away and unpromising that no experienced teacher would take it, and if no one better fitted than I turned up in the meanwhile he would save it for me. He broke his rule for me, too, and said I needn't pay any registration fee unless he got me the school, and then not until I had received my first salary.

I remember, as I rose to thank him, I couldn't keep the tears out of my eyes, I was so thankful and cold and faint — faint from nervous exhaustion and lack of my usual dinner. Then he called his secretary and told her to take me into his private office till I felt better.

Goodness, how I ramble on!

When I saw that man again it was midsummer, after the close of my first half-year. He had given me the school and advanced my railroad fare. I had been re-elected. How bright everything seemed. Mother was better and had made a lot of money out of the graduation dresses of the girls in my class. She made yours, I think. I had a small sum, about fifty dollars, after paying for my board, fares, and the agency. (You know, they charge you a certain per cent. of a whole year's salary, whether you teach a year or not, for each school they find you. Mine was five per cent. This is besides the registration fee, of course.) I had lived like a miser, denying myself everything except postage stamps.

Imagine a little white schoolhouse of one room, nestled among the hills at the bend of a lonely country road, without

another habitation in sight. They are scattered all over rural New England. A cracked blackboard and a worn map of Vermont adorned the walls. The teacher's desk was a rude pine table, just like you imagine was used in your grandmother's day. The children sat in double seats, which didn't make the discipline any too easy. Then there was the stove, 'round which the little scamps, all sizes and ages, used to huddle on cold wet days. Wood had to be put in every few minutes. Some of the time my big boys were off cutting ice, so I had to make the fire myself in the dreary, freezing mornings.

Still, I had a position and was self-supporting, instead of being a drag on mother. That thought spurred me on to success. I boarded with a deaf and ancient female, who lived too far for me to

go home at noon. Hence the tin pail full of abhorred doughnuts and pie.

There were many anxious times when it took every bit of tact and ingenuity I could muster to meet the situation. There were also happy, social times and grange meetings, ladies' aids, and church affairs, where I couldn't help overhearing the country people doing me up brown with gossip, most of it harmless and kindly.

The most fearful part of it all came when I first arrived in the village. I had to pass the State's examination for teachers, held in a neighboring town. And if I had failed, after the fight of securing that school and the long trip on borrowed money, I rather think I should have passed gently away. But my good angel guided me through the rather out-of-the-usual questions, and then I had a

dinner with the examining superintendent who ate with his knife!

At the close of the winter and spring terms I was a different girl — stronger with the bracing country air, and confident of success; in fact, I thought myself quite capable of filling any teaching position now that I had had some blessed experience.

I sought the kind man. He didn't recognize me. New shoes, a freshened wardrobe and a smile work wonders. He had another school picked out for me, still in the wilderness, to be sure, but with a better salary. Of course, that meant I'd have to pay another five per cent. of the salary of that school if I accepted it; and I had just finished paying five per cent. for the half year I'd taught and would have to make up the same amount for the half year I didn't teach on the first school! It

seemed terrible to me to pay out that money for the time I wasn't there, but I suppose agencies have to get their living somehow. Anyway, as I explained, it's a certain per cent. of a full year's salary for each new school they get you, unless you're a substitute.

Grateful as I was and ever will be to this agency, it seems to me that if I had had a normal training I would have called on the superintendents for miles around and been my own agency. But there are girls who don't have the initiative, or, perhaps, the ready car fare; and, besides, I know of several who have received far better positions through this medium than were possible in their immediate locality.

I figured out the problem of raise in salary vs. agency dues, and found that I'd gain a little by the change. I kept the second district school a whole year, and

then was given a better room, with only two grades instead of eight, by my superintendent. This schoolhouse was situated right in the village and the work was pleasanter and easier every way.

Still, I could never hope for a really good school until I was better fitted. Efficiency, training, — I must go to normal. Every one said so. The kind man told me the only reason he gave me my first school was because he had no one else in the middle of the year who would accept it. "You see," he declared, "the poorly paid rural schools either have to take a green, inexperienced teacher, who may or may not be a success, or else a full-fledged, older person, who hasn't been a success or she wouldn't be after such a vacancy."

Even now I wonder how I ever saved enough for my board during that one year

I spent at normal when I was a special student. But I did it, and have been cramming in all the possible summer courses for teachers ever since.

Somehow, as I recall all the struggles of those early days, I can't find it in my heart to advise you to begin it. A girl with your education and ability can teach somewhere without any training, but it's a long, hard, endless pull of nerve-racking, desolate years before the experience you gather is enough to offset the normal you lack. Now, in most of our cities, normal training is required, no matter how much experience you may have had.

Some one once said that no one ever amounted to anything until he had borrowed money and paid it back again. I hate the idea and could never advise any one to do it. Yet, I realize now that if some one had seen me safely through a

normal course, I could have paid back the board, book and fare money, saved some, and been far better off than I am to-day after years of plugging incessantly — to say nothing of the difference in the way I might have lived during that period of getting on my feet. Experience you must have, but I hope and pray you will not have to take the road I took to get it. Though it is possible, remember.

There is a free normal in your section of the State. You might be able to enter this year's class now, as a special, and make up the first half-year's work next summer. Thus you would save six months' time. Efficiency, let me din it into you, is the word of the age; and you've got to live up to it or get out of the way for some one else. Begin right end to, if you possibly can, and not backwards as I did.

Teachers have lots of good times. Last spring those in our building went to Washington, and oh, it was such a treat! I had never been anywhere before, except to Vermont! This year, four of the girls are going to Europe on a personally conducted tour — my most cherished dream, but a distant one, I'm afraid.

If there is anything else I can tell you, don't hesitate to ask and ask and ask. I hope this letter hasn't been too discouraging. I've tried to be truthful and fair. Get your training and teach — don't teach and get your training.

Oh, one word more about your music. Why don't you take a teacher's course in that? Special teachers often make more money than regulars. Why not write for particulars?

Darker than pitch. The janitor has just fired up for the night and gone home. I'll

lose my boarding place if I'm late to supper, so

Bye, bye, with much affection from

ELIZABETH.

P. S. What have I been telling you? At best, teaching is an awful grind. You get into a rut, where you narrow down and acquire that "biddy" look I dread. Most of us who get the chance, get out. If you can find love in your heart, you'd be wiser to take "Tad" and teach your own little kiddies. Forgive this from

BETTY.

XIII

THERESA DECLARES SHE'S A WALKING POOLE'S INDEX

Public Library, Emerald Lake, Vt.

My Dear Unknown Lady:

Our mutual friend (a purist would probably say there was no such thing, but the expression is so convenient!) our mutual friend, Sally Saunders, who, you

know, is spending the winter at the Inn, is responsible for this communication to you and should be made to stand the consequences, if any there are.

Sally dropped in upon me last evening and began to vociferate so volubly that I finally had to lead her by the hand over to a "No Loud Talking" sign, which I pointed to distractedly. Sally kept right on, however, saying, oh, ever so many splendid things about you.

What a true-blue, sincere little girl Sally is! She is so terribly conscientious. She seemed very much concerned about you, and set your image before me with such glowing appreciation that I cannot help believing that you are a reincarnated goddess. I feel deeply honored that a mere plebeian like me has the privilege of addressing you.

Whom Sally likes, I like. So consider yourself liked right away. If we ever have the opportunity of becoming better acquainted, I hope my name will find its way upon your list of friends.

Sally asked me to tell you all I know. It won't take very long, Miss Kent! Such as it is, I lay it at your service.

Do you passionately love books? Do you love them so much that you not only love to read them and own them, but love to handle them, to touch them, to see them around in other people's houses, where you may never get any closer than to look at them? I do.

Does it pain you, yes, positively pain you, to see a person injure a book — lay it down half open, deliberately turn down its pages to mark a place, or ruthlessly force it apart and break its delicate back? Not one in ninety-nine knows how to open

a new book! It distracts me beyond everything!

To me books are human, far better than some humans, for somewhere in their vast number dwell companions with just the qualities you best admire, qualities often difficult to find among the real flesh and blood of your chance acquaintance.

An artistic cover sends me into rhapsodies. The very type and feel of the paper are entrancing. All the make-up is of great interest, and when I come across a catchy title, a little out of the rut and suggestive, it gives me intense pleasure.

If I enjoy a book I keep it in constant circulation. I become a regular advertising medium. "I don't know what I want. What's in that's good?" is the beginning of the continual daily performance, whenever some one comes in to exchange a book. "Take this; it's simply great!" I

declare, shoving my latest favorite through the slide.

Thus do I send my children out into the world, for they are my children, these books. Perhaps the authors might dispute this point, but they must allow, at least, that they are my foster-children. I regard them as such, anyway, and keep them in fine trim and ever on the trot. No sooner does one return and render a good account of himself to show that he hasn't been visiting long enough to be fined than out he goes again to gladden a new little bookworm.

You would be amazed to realize the influence a librarian has upon the reading public of a small community. Of course, there are books and books. We carry both kinds. Having grown up in the atmosphere of good books and being naturally a lover of worth-while reading, I

can keep our young people pretty close to the path of standard literature and the higher class of novels by merely suggesting what they shall take out when they ask me to. They take my word for it, usually like what I give them, and ask for more.

In a wee mite of a way I feel myself a kind of educator, for isn't the cultivation of a good taste for reading considered one of the very best parts of education?

If left entirely to themselves, the boys and girls of to-day are apt to select rather trashy, highly-colored fiction, and the most fastidious of them seem bound to stick to one style. It's interesting to switch them off, little by little, into something that is really fine, and watch the way they devour it.

Not that we carry a heap of trash. Our books are selected most carefully by the

board of trustees, but you know the numberless volumes which are to be found on the shelves of all libraries, that are perfectly harmless and yet insipid collections of absolutely nothing.

I give you this little introduction (the introduction, by the way, is my favorite part of any book, when it's well written) because I want you to have a glimpse inside the heart of a librarian who loves her work. Here is a real incentive, and, I know you will agree, a noble one. No work amounts to anything without an incentive, a motive, a purpose, — do you think so?

At a hasty glance the duties of a library worker seem to be what might be called a "soft snap." Just receive and deliver books and acquire a muscular knowledge of the stamp act, and that's all there is to it.

"The hours, too, dead easy," airily explains some one who knows nothing about it. "Just two to six and seven to nine, or three to five, or four to one, and three nights a week if you live far enough back in the country," they glibly reel off.

Wait a second. How about that card index — who does that indexing for each new book? I do. Do you ever have new catalogues — who makes them up? I do. Whose business is it to mend torn pages so neatly with transparent paper? Mine. I see the newspaper and magazine files are up to the minute — who attends to that? Um, hum, I do. Whom is it up to to arrange that attractive case full of the newest books so temptingly? Me. And the "just added to our library" lists in the papers? Ditto. And so forth and so on through a long list of details which re-

quire many a morning's attention, but with which I will not weary you.

Sally impressed it upon me that you desired to know how to start. I began at the bottom, the very lowest bottom, as soon as I was out of high school. During the vacation of the summer before I graduated I assisted in our little library part of the time. The head librarian (there were only two of us) received the princely pay of two hundred and seventy-five dollars a year, while mine was put completely out of sight by that munificent sum. You must bear in mind that I lived in a tiny town of less than three thousand. I lived at home and had what I earned for spending money.

Some weeks before school closed I wrote to the librarians of larger surrounding towns, and applied for the first vacancy. I could not hope to stay in our home li-

brary, even had I been contented with the little position, because our lady in charge was a fixture. I can never remember when she wasn't there, and believe she must have begun with the corner stone of the old building.

After a time word came from one of my letters, and I immediately plunged into Emerald Lake, where I've been for over two years. Here I have had excellent training under a splendid librarian who took a four years' course in college. She said every assistant she had ever trained into being of any use to her had gone off and got married as soon as she was good for anything. I promised her I would never do such a thing. And I haven't. But she did! Last June I became the "It" of this establishment.

The demand is, of course, for trained librarians. It is almost impossible to get

into even a small town without real experience or practical training. I try to make up for my lack of college training by studying all the time I can spare the subjects outlined by my former head librarian. She was good enough to lend me some of the French and German books she used and tell me just how to take up each course. Why, a librarian nowadays is supposed to know all about the making of books, even to the bindings and watermarks!

To-day has been so snowy that I brought my supper with me, as I often do in unpleasant weather. I have been writing you during the "closed" hour, and it is now just seven o'clock so I must open the doors. You wouldn't believe how many folks will leave their perfectly warm houses in a howling storm like this to go after something to read. I do hope

they will bring green bags, or some sort of protective covering, for my poor perishable children, so that the color won't run off their defenceless backs!

There, I have let them in, a whole troop of boys. Gracious, what a noise they make! I'll have to leave you and go right into the children's reading room.

(Later)

I've shut them up!

One of a librarian's prime duties is to answer all sorts of crazy questions, which brings to mind that old quotation of Johnson's — "Knowledge is of two kinds: we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it." I have to be a walking Poole's Index, ready for the queerest queries.

If this somewhat detached account of

my work offers any inducements to you, why don't you try to get into a small library to see how you'd like it? You would not earn much to begin with, scarcely your shoe-strings. Perhaps your own town may need an assistant. I would ask if I were you. Shall I send you the names and addresses of two librarians I know?

I shall be happy to hear further from you, and if you ever do come to Emerald Lake to see Sally, please drop in.

Sally hinted something about a young man. I think as she does about it, if you will pardon my presumption in saying so.

There go those boys again! I must get after them, so excuse the brief manner in which I cut this off.

Cordially yours,

THERESA DAVENPORT.

XIV

ELINOR TRIPS THE LIGHT FANTASTIC TOE

Dancing School Day
at Chipman's Hall, Easton.

My Dear Long-lost Joy:

Tucked away in my chatelaine for reference at the first moment of leisure, your letter is insistently shrieking, "Answer me! Answer me!" So I just will, and

right now, too, with the implements at hand. They consist of a dozen blank dance orders with dangly little tasselled pencils attached.

My afternoon class of some thirty-three Terpsichorean marvels has just grand marched and courtesied itself out of the hall. I've bowed so much myself that I am actually bowing to you as I begin to greet you. Each child salutes his partner and then me as he leaves the ballroom. It is a great back exerciser!

In less than two hours the evening class, all adults, will come trooping in. I have two classes in each town where I teach, one from four until six for the youngsters, and the other, high schoolers, mostly, from eight until ten. Besides three sets of these, varying from twenty to forty pupils each, I have one married class and a beginners' Saturday morning. So you

see it is " trip the light fantastic toe " most of the time with me.

My terms are five dollars for twelve lessons for children, and six dollars per quarter for grown-ups.

Expenses are high. There is the hall to be hired, and I always select the one in the town best suited to the purpose. The pianist has to have her travelling expenses, and I pay mine a round little sum besides, for I find it pays me in the end to furnish good music, the pupils progress so much faster. I always keep my business card in three or four local papers in the different towns, and that counts up. Then there are incidentals, dance orders (I buy them by the gross and don't make my classes pay for them as some teachers do) and fares and suppers for myself and Miss Norton, who plays for me. And so it goes.

But it comes in, too, lots of it. Only you must take into consideration that the dancing season doesn't last through the whole fifty-two weeks in the year. Vacations pop up at frequent intervals. Pupils fall in and pupils fall out from time to time, which makes the number very uncertain and elastic. Some quarters coin money; others barely cover the outlay; and twice I've gone way behind. This is my best winter, so far.

In spite of the high cost of living I find that people are bound their children shall have everything that's going, and even more than they used to have when the cost wasn't talked about so much.

All little tots love to dance. That is what makes the teaching of it so delightful. There is no humdrum practising about it which becomes so burdensome to children, as in the case of piano lessons.

Nor are they obliged to do it as they are to go to school. They love to dance. They beg to come. It is a privilege and not a detested duty. They enjoy it more and more after they know how. Therefore, the class as a whole cannot help being a success, almost in spite of the teacher.

There are awkward, bashful boys, of course, corps of them, who hate it at first; but give me three lessons and I'll vouch for them. Usually their "best girls" are there to march in with, and that makes up a little for the curse of trying to manage the right feet at the right time. I pounce on a timid little quitter and trail him around with me for a couple of afternoons, by which time he invariably turns out to be the most polished kind of a Beau Brummel.

All tuition is demanded either in ad-

vance or before the first half of the quarter is over. Almost never do I lose, although occasionally some one backs out of the class at the end of the second or third lesson and refuses to pay for more than he has had. I don't fuss about this, as it isn't worth it and seldom happens, though the agreement is supposed to be for the entire quarter.

Perhaps you think, after doing some mental arithmetic, that I ought to be rich. I'm not poor. I live comfortably all the year round, as well as during the dancing season, and I make all my money from my classes. The between time is my own. But if you will remember how you used to marvel at the gorgeous raiment of that old freak who taught "Fancy Dancing and Deportment" in our town hall you will readily see where a large slice of a dancing teacher's income goes to. Cos-

tumes? The Queen of Sheba wasn't in it with us!

Children like fringe and ribbons and lace and fichus and soft, dainty gowns, while their mamas demand them. I know for a fact that lots of mothers care more about coming to see how my dresses are made than to watch the progress of their enfants terribles. No sooner do I wear a stylish new costume, than presto! one of the wall-flower ladies has copied it. I do not mind in the least. It brings trade.

Slippers are an item; and favors, too, for the grand assemblies which close up the dancing season. I do a little extra in the line of favors for these parties, although the pupils ordinarily provide their own.

To be a successful teacher one must be strictly up-to-date in dancing. Whatever is the latest, whether it bear the igno-

minious name of "Turkey Trot Gavotte" or "Pannier Waltz," must be at your — I started to say fingers' end but toes' end might be more applicable. Parents and children alike love to get hold of a simple glide or new dip, any kind of a step as long as it is the rage. It doesn't matter whether it is really new or not, if only they think it is.

A new dance is a good advertisement for me. The children brag about it all over town. Only yesterday I came upon a group of little girls who were playing dancing school out on the sidewalk in front of one of their houses. "We will now learn a new dance, called the 'Yankee Caprice,'" announced the little teacher, whom I recognized as one of my Saturday morning beginners, in exactly my tone of voice. "Now, look — it's step, step, glide, glide, glide, and a turn —" she directed,

lifting up her little short skirts in imitation of me, while the others eagerly strove to find out with which foot to begin.

It brought me back in a jiffy to the time I used to gather the whole neighborhood up into our old barn after school and dance to the tune of that squeaky graphophone, one of the very first models, I suppose. Do you remember how it always ran down right in the middle of everything? And, oh, say, J. K., will you ever forget the night we had that gypsy party, ten of us girls, with me for the queen, when that wretched brother of mine let loose that cask of eels? Didn't we take to our 'eels, though! I had almost forgotten all about that!

There are only four dance orders left, but I'll write as tiny as I can.

Somehow, I feel as though I were laying this profession before you best side up.

I am doing well now and I am apt to lose sight of the fact that it was not ever thus. Oh, those first days! All beginnings are hard, when you have not much to begin with.

Luckily I had Tom. He's married now and big and handsome. You'd never know him for that scamp who kept us in mortal terror with his pranks. He has turned all his mischief into tenderness and solicitude, since he's grown up, and is the very best brother ever.

I wanted to experiment with a dancing class, but didn't care to do it at home, for fear it might fail and make me a laughing-stock. Tom immediately understood and invited me to spend the fall and winter with him. This was the fall after I graduated.

Tom and Rosalie (that's his wife's name, and, if his own sister does say it,

she's been the making of Tom) — well, they got my first class together for me. I don't deserve any credit at all, except that I kept things going and made the arrangements. They were all married people, eight couples, and all knew how to dance but one man. He dropped out after a little because his silly young wife got jealous when I tried to teach him not to walk like a giraffe. These married people were just beyond the age of going to dances as a regular thing, and they simply revelled in our informal good times.

Tom is popular at the club. He told lots of his friends about my project and this, together with the soliciting I did myself, got me a small afternoon class. The married class increased. The work was started. Little by little I branched out into nearby towns. Once a success, I felt pretty safe.

You may wonder where I learned how to teach. I didn't learn how, any more than you or the other girls who are given a few quarters at dancing school as a part of their education learn how. I am naturally a good dancer. I knew the rudimentary steps, and could waltz, polka, two-step, galop, schottische, and go through the figures in the lanciers and Portland fancy. I remembered lots of the positions from practising them on the children in our old barn. For the German I chose simple things, peppermints or valentines or inexpensive, home-made favors.

Tom, dear old thing, paid for some private lessons for me that winter, and I studied as I had never before. Occasionally, even now, I brush up with a private teacher. You have to keep up, for dancing styles change along with the clothes you dance in.

Of late years dancing has been going at such a pace! I wonder what the old Greeks would say if they could witness the "Bunny Hug" or the "Grizzly Bear" or the "Turkey Trot!" Of course I never taught any of these! Dancing was an art in those by-gone days. Even the old-fashioned minuets, cotillions, and quadrilles of a few generations ago bore some semblance to grace and beauty. But to-day — it's positively a degradation the way the boys and girls dance! I'm on my hobby now. Forgive me if I ride it too hard.

My work isn't, as you may be led to suppose, all one grand party. When that long line stands before me on the floor trying to perform the "pas de quatre," it requires more patience than the immortal Job ever thought of to drive it into their heads, or feet, or wherever it goes.

In bad weather, when I have to go from town to town, changing cars with frequent delays, the trips seem arduous, especially when I don't feel very well and realize that I must stand on my feet all during the lessons.

The discipline is a disagreeable factor. A public school teacher has the solace of being in a position to chastise. A dancing school teacher must discipline by sheer personality. Mindful of the fact that deportment is a part of her teaching, she must not only be a model herself, but must change all the unruly, little imps into perfect ladies and gentlemen, sparing the rod whether they need it or not, and this with their proud mamas looking on, who can't do a thing with Willie at home!

Some dancing teachers employ assistants to help keep order, make the lines

straight and find partners. I don't because I limit my classes.

Next year I'm planning to give up one of my best towns, which is too far out of my circle, and if you should decide to become a dancing teacher you may have it. The pupils are all advanced, so you wouldn't find it difficult, for I could give you all the pointers you would need.

You could work up a class of beginners right there at home, I should think, if you cared to. You know as much about dancing as I did when I began, and you'll learn more than you will ever teach for the first few lessons. If I were you I should make a detour of the surrounding cities where there are schools already established and try to work in as an assistant, until I knew the ropes.

There will be no sacrilege about dancing even at this sad time in your life. Con-

sider it just business. I've danced with a heartache many a time. There is money ahead waiting for you, if you will get busy and organize. The rest takes care of itself.

I will gladly give you enough private lessons to bring you up to the new steps. There aren't very many and they're all similar. If you can manage one class you won't have any difficulty, for it's the same thing over and over.

Miss Norton has brought me in a bite from a restaurant, which I must gobble (that is, gobble the bite, not the restaurant!) before the evening class arrives.

Don't let yourself brood, dear. Keep active. I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart for what you asked me not to mention. The future is full of good things for you, I feel confident, so work and dance and smile!

This is the end of my last dance order. Turn it over and read the margin.

(Over)

Why pirouette through life when you can take Mr. S. and make him dance for you? It's horribly lonely after the garish ball! Take my word for it, dear.

ELINOR STOCKTON.

MARJORIE BECOMES A BONA FIDE FARMER

Baked Bean Night.

YOU POOR LITTLE CHICKEN:

So you've got to scratch for yourself now! Then you'd better go right into the poultry business. You already possess enough grit for both yourself and the hens, and that is all you will need except the

ability to make a mash! Mr. Tad, no doubt, would make affidavit that you can do that to perfection, but the kind of a mash I mean is a mixture of more or less wheat bran, rolled oats, molasses, alfalfa meal, charcoal, cornmeal, shredded wheat waste, meat meal, plus or minus a pound of poultry tonic, served wet or dry according to the taste.

"I would like to see any one make money out of hens," whine the failures, who have whined the same whine about almost everything else they ever tried to do. If you should scrutinize their hen yards I'll bet that you would find that the entire cash outlay had been put into the aristocratic habitations of the poor little chicks, while a cheap crop of sickly stragglers, without any pedigree to crow about, feebly strutted around taking care of themselves.

Hens haven't any sense, and if the owner hasn't any sense either, the case is hopeless. No one should expect any hen, however well-meaning, to solve all the family problems herself. Do your duty by her and she'll lay to and reciprocate.

What makes our great broad country so rich? Agriculture. "Back to the farm" is the slogan of the age. I echo it with all my heart. If only I had been a man! What acres and acres and herds and flocks and — why, I'd have been a millionaire in no time! As it is, I'm not doing so badly for just a girl, a girl with six handicaps.

Why not get yourself a little hencoop and turn "biddy," with a little market gardening on the side? You'd be so busy that your mind would be occupied all the time, and you would soon have enough to keep up your home, health and happiness.

That is just it, if you want to have anything to show for this kind of work, you will have to put just as much mind and strength into it as you would in any other paying occupation. Nothing runs itself.

Gardening is such a delight! I know almost every individual plant in ours; and they all know me, or they nod as if they did in the early morning when I visit them.

We specialize on asparagus and the best sweet corn ever grown anywhere. Oh, it is perfectly delicious! Its fame has brought us many orders from the village people who do not have gardens of their own, and they always begin to cry ahead for it, long before the ears are ripe.

It is the most beautiful place, this garden of ours, full of all kinds of mysterious little green buds and interesting growing things. There are lettuce, radishes, onions, tomatoes, squash (summer and

winter), carrots, parsley, rhubarb, turnips, celery, cucumbers, peas, butter-beans, tender, high-pole, green string-beans, sweet corn, asparagus, cabbages, beets, spinach, and potatoes, of course.

We raise enough of everything for ourselves, and nearly enough of everything for a dozen families who buy exclusively of us, but we send most of the specialties to market.

Blueberries abound in the pastures here, and I hire my little brothers to pick them when they are visiting me summers. There are also quantities of wild blackberries and not a few raspberries. We have already set out some gooseberry bushes, and this year are going to try our luck at a strawberry patch. Our idea is to keep up with that stale old joke by selling all the fresh fruit we can and canning all we can't.

There is great demand for home-made preserves, you know. This country is full of elderberries, which the boys bring home in mammoth pailfuls. You ought to see the calls we have for the ruby wine we press them into! I wish I could give you a little glass this minute, or else some raspberry cordial. It would do wonders to your spirits.

Next summer we hope to add a cow to our household, and then we'll be bona fide farmers.

To think I have written as far as this and not mentioned our adorable flowers! The whole farm looks like one great garden in summer, for dotted all over the place are gaily colored little rockeries and different shaped beds. There is a long strip of sweet peas, at the foot of which grow dainty ladies' delights. On either side of the path leading to the picturesque

old-time front doorway bloom giant scarlet poppies, while clustered in among them a background of white sweet alyssum sends forth its fragrant breath. Then, of course, there is the same old-fashioned mixture which is typical of country gardens. Hardy candy-tuft, sweet-william, balm, foxglove, morning-glories, petunias, marigolds, phlox, heart's ease, mignonette, enormous sunny sunflowers, and, oh, yes, zinnias, and ever so many I can't think of just at present. Nasturtiums and pansies each have a rockery of their own. You would love our flowers.

I have been so happy and contented since we entered into this out-of-door life that I am more than anxious to show up its opportunities to any girl who has her own way to make in the world and who loves nature. It offers so many more of the real enjoyments of life than can ever

fall to the lot of those who are boxed up in stores or factories or offices or even schoolrooms.

After we moved to Lynn I suppose that you and all the rest of the girls thought that I kept right on going to school. Well, I didn't. Pa went into a shoe factory and I went with him. We kept the younger children in school. We lived in a tenement on the top floor of one of those old firetrap buildings which are now gradually disappearing, thank heavens! Four long flights of stairs to be climbed every night when I got home after standing on my feet all day at the factory.

I didn't stand at first. I began on piecework. Pa did the same. I was quicker than he and earned more money. It was lucky I did!

You may wonder how we children were so well dressed when we lived in your

neighborhood. It was the only time in our lives that we were well dressed, and it came about through our being the beneficiaries of a life insurance policy, left by a great-uncle we never had seen, to be used for us at the discretion of Pa. Pa used it as soon as he could get it, and as long as it lasted we lived comfortably. But a few thousand dollars doesn't keep a family of eight going forever. Pa seemed to think it would. He never was very provident. I guess he couldn't help it. To-morrow could take care of itself, and nothing really mattered so long as we weren't really hungry and there was still enough tobacco left for another smoke.

Mr. Micawber didn't have a thing on my Pa! Nothing turned up, however, except bills, which finally turned us out. Then came the factory, the point of least resistance.

We got along somehow, the boys and I doing the work between school and factory hours. I guess you don't know what a hard time is, Joy. Wait until you get home exhausted from doing piecemeal as fast as you can all day, having walked seven brick blocks, interminable ones, to save a nickel, and then find you have to turn around and get a snatched-up, bake-shop dinner for eight! Tin cans and paper bags make the most expensive kind of a meal, too, though I don't know what some of our tired men and women who work and keep house at the same time would do without them. Canned beans and dried herring and baker's greasy doughnuts and pie, ugh!

This state of affairs continued for three years. I was promoted from one kind of work to another until I finally became a forewoman. The majority of the girls I

worked with snubbed me because they thought I thought I was superior. In reality I envied them! They had never known any different existence, and were care-free and irresponsible for the most part. To them the factory was a means to an end. They accepted it as all they knew how to accept, or expected, until they got married. If they returned afterwards, it was a matter of course. They were used to it. Evenings found them at the " movies," or in cheap dance halls.

One girl I found — a jewel — a girl like you and the rest of the little clique I once associated with. The factory was no place for her, either. Unfortunate circumstances had likewise forced her there. She kept aloof from the crowd, but soon sized me up. We were together at all possible times, and she was forever dinning the abandoned farm idea into my head.

"If we could only save enough to just keep from starving until we got fairly started," she would exclaim, "I know just what you and I would do, Marj! We would go up to my grandfather's old place in New Hampshire. No one has lived there for quite a number of years, and the roof probably leaks, as the old house is all going to decay, but we could get it rent free as it legally belongs to me. It has been for sale for years, but it's in an out-of-the-way part of the village and the town isn't growing any, so I don't ever expect to get rid of it. You save every cent you can, and —"

"I do and always have," I interrupted her quietly, "but you must choose some other girl to share your farm dream." Then I told her, for the first time, how every penny I could rake and scrape went into stockings and shoes and bread and

butter and dentists for the five boys and little sister.

"You shall go just the same! I'll do it alone," she cried, her sympathetic brown eyes filling with tears. And she did. She set us up in the poultry business, buying good healthy Barred Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes and a few Reds. We bought the incubator the second year. Agnes insisted upon getting the best seeds on the market, and I do wish you could have seen us two girls when we first began gardening. We did everything except the ploughing!

There were some old tools in the barn, rusted and bent and out-of-date, to be sure, but they served. We turned carpenters and built, or rebuilt, the dilapidated, weather-beaten hen houses, and repaired the old house itself as well as we could.

Little by little we collected enough fur-

niture to be decent, buying most of it at country auctions. At first, though, it was a sort of camp life and awfully cold, for we started in early enough to begin the Spring planting and the season was very late, I remember. We had been studying up all that winter before, and began very moderately with less than half the variety of things we now raise.

You may wonder why I deserted Pa. I didn't. He deserted me. He married a widow — a factory woman, far beneath him, whose sole property consisted of three more children! To see that woman in poor Ma's place was too much for me. I left the boys with their father and took my little sister with Agnes and me. You ought to see what sturdy little legs her wasp-like spindleshanks have turned into. She is going to the village school next fall.

This is my story, a whole history, you

may think. It's what I did under great obstacles, or, to be more exact, it is what Agnes did, for she, brave, self-denying girl, went without everything to start us. I can truthfully say that I've done my share on the farm, though.

Except for the little we had gleaned from books out of the library, we two knew practically nothing about either a garden or hens. But we went at it with the same vim that we had formerly used in making shoes. We had worked so hard that I doubt if we could have let up even if we had wanted to. Oh, but the change was refreshing!

That first year was hard sledging. We did every thing we knew how to do, and many which we didn't. We cropped enough to eat, and sold a little garden truck and a few broilers. Eggs — it makes me bilious even now to think how

many we consumed! Honestly, it is no more than the truth to say that we were ashamed to look our hens in the face!

Farmer Thompkins, who lived next neighbor to us and had been a boyhood friend of Agnes' grandfather, agreed to do our ploughing. We owe him a great deal of our success, for he it was who offered to take our stuff to market when he took his own, and advised us to specialize. We chose asparagus and sweet corn because they were not in his line and 'most everything else was. We wouldn't steal the dear old man's trade for worlds!

The first time we had an order for a fowl Agnes and I nearly died of grief and just sat looking at each other for over an hour. Kill one of our biddies that we had petted and fed for so many months! We almost decided to go back to the factory. Finally we roused ourselves and decided that busi-

ness was business, and that either our chicks would have to die or we would ourselves. So we raced up to Mr. Thompkins's, for neither of us had ever picked a hen.

"We don't want to have her suffer," we directed, as he seized the handsome Barred Rock in one hand and an axe in the other. "Be merciful. Do be merciful!" screamed Agnes. I flew out of sight around the shed, but she came tearing after me and vowed I'd have to learn how the deed was done. I learned, and so did she, but we always hire some one else to do the killing to this day!

"Ha! ha! I'll learn ye how to kill yer chicks as merciful as I know on," roared the old farmer. "Jest one chop and there ye be," he went on; and, oh, I shall never forget the sight of that poor headless creature floundering around, as long as I live.

I thought she would never die, and when I looked for Agnes, who had been sitting on the grass, I found she had fainted dead away!

Do you know Farmer Thompkins told the whole village about the "merciful girls," as he called us, and the name has brought us lots of business, bless him.

"You gals remind me of a city feller who once kept nine hens fer pets," he told us one day. "He went off on a fishin' trip for two weeks, and not wishin' to appear stingy to his biddies, he filled the hoppers with what he cal'lated was enough feed ter last 'em while he was gone."

"That was kind of him," I ventured.

"Kind of him! Lor' sakes," snorted Silas Thompkins, "the danged fool critters e't so much they busted!"

During the long winter evenings I have had a splendid opportunity to go on with

my somewhat neglected education. Agnes, too, loves to read, and is remarkably well informed considering the slim chance she has had. We spend most of our time reading garden literature, and are making improvements slowly but surely. Like all beginners we have made, and still make, lots of mistakes, some of them costly to us and fatal to the hens. It's no easy problem to be a mamma to a chick, and a nurse and doctor into the bargain.

Then there are fertilizers and soil and pests to be studied, besides incubation and nourishment and moulting and sowing and transplanting and weeding and watering, etc. (This may sound a little mixed up, but you will probably understand it just as well.)

It is a paying business for any one who will work. Nothing pays without work, as you'll soon find out. Can't you think of

some girl friend or relative who would start a garden with you? I'll give you eight hundred and seventy-five "don'ts" and three hundred and sixteen "do's" to go by. It is all I can give you, I'm sorry to say, except encouragement. What little I have to give goes into railroad fares for my five brothers who take turns coming down here to visit each summer.

Don't be afraid because you're green at it. We were so green that when old Farmer Thompkins once jollied us with: "Say, girls, ain't it funny how the old hens know enough to pick up exactly the right little pieces of egg-shells they git to eat and match 'em into brand new shells!" Agnes 'lowed 'twas!

I smell the beans! I must stop and put some water into them. How time flies! It's supper time and my hungry family will soon come clamoring in with frosty

appetites. Won't they growl if it isn't ready! Two of the boys are here for their Christmas vacation, the two who didn't come last summer. They have made some skis out of old barrel staves and I can see them sliding down the slope of the hill back of our house, for I am writing you on the kitchen table, as the kitchen is our only real warm room.

Remember me lovingly to all my old friends, if you please, and keep a whole lot of affection for the girl who mercifully kills her hens, and will now be merciful and not kill you with any more about Marjorie Benton.

Our floors creak in a ghostly manner at night. I often wish there were a man in the house. Agnes and I never had a chance to meet any desirable men until we came here, and most of the country boys are either away at college or settled in

business somewhere else. Our minister has his eye on Agnes. If she marries, everything will change for me, though she vows she'll enter a convent before she'll leave me.

Joy, if you and I had a wishbone to pull, and I got the longer end, I'd wish that you would get under the wing of that sweetheart of yours. Poor little chicken, don't get lost out in the world alone!

Hens are frightfully unclean birds. The most attractive one I ever knew was in the ragged Mother Goose book I used to read aloud to my little brothers and baby sister. You'd better get acquainted with:

"Higgledy-Piggledy, my black hen,
She lays eggs for gentlemen;
Sometimes nine, sometimes ten,
Higgledy-Piggledy, my black hen!"

XVI

FELICE WAS BORROWED TO TEND THE BILLINGSES' BABY

At Home,
After every one's asleep.

YOU SWEET THING:

I'm engaged! Isn't it heavenly? How dear of you to confide in me. Sympathy for a mutual state of happiness must have

been the magnet which drew your thoughts to me.

Oh, you dear old Silly, do not waste another minute puzzling your little brain about the struggling masses. Not as long as you have Tad, anyway.

Remember him — I should say I did! He's the dearest (don't know how well Charles would like to see this, nor just how you will take it, but I repeat) he's the dearest boy in the whole world except Charles. I always call him "Charles," because that's his name. It sounds so much more dignified and manly than "Charlie," and, besides, every one else calls him that. "Charles" is distinctive and has a certain character, don't you think so?

Well, Tad (of course a nickname is all right in a case like Tad's, when we've never heard him called anything else,

though I must say "Thaddeus" has a classical air about it) Tad went to college with Charles. Didn't he ever tell you? You just ask him what he knows about Charles Spaulding, and he will tell you that he's the cleverest, handsomest, most lovable man in the universe. Just ask him, if you think I'm prejudiced.

Charles says, — you mustn't mind if I have told him just a little about you. We are always going to tell each other everything. Don't think I broke faith with you, because to tell me is to tell him, and to tell him is to tell me — it's the very same thing either way. You needn't worry, for he can keep a secret even better than I!

Charles says, and really he has great judgment for a person of his age, "you write Joy to-morrow and tell her she won't make any mistake if she marries Sears. I

know him through and through. He's a fine, clean fellow, straight as a die." Those were his very words, for I copied them down as soon as they were out of his mouth so as to give you exactly what he said. He ought to know, too, because he was associated with Tad a lot, although a year ahead of him, and accordingly older and more experienced.

Charles has just gone home. It's awfully late, an hour past the regular time; but then we spent over an hour talking about you and had to make it up. The door squeaked horribly, and I was afraid he'd wake everybody up. As I tiptoed back to the library I could hear serene, sonorous snores from above, which assured me that all's quiet on the Potomac. Aren't such escapes harrowing! I'm quaking yet. My father said that the next time Charles stayed after half-past ten,

he'd have to lose a whole evening. And he only comes twice a week!

I have taken you into my confidence, also, for you are the only one outside the family to hear about my being engaged, though I guess some others have suspected. Charles and I have decided not to announce it until he can get another raise, which he is going to strike for in about five months. I don't like to have too long a time elapse between the diamond ring and the wonderful plain gold band.

I don't know whether I make it strong enough or not, but both of us think you will be very foolish if you don't solve your life problem by marrying Tad. How can you help it? He's so nice! You couldn't find a better husband unless you should steal Charles away from me, and there would be a great big obstacle in the way of doing that, namely, me!

Now that I have disposed of you sanely, I'll try to be of what little use I can to you, which won't be much, I fear.

Like you, I once had a longing to go forth and seek my fortune. Like you, too, dear Joy, I've had to give up any ambitions I might have had and stay at home and help. Mother needed me. I was the only daughter, again like you. My mother never was very strong, and father pointed out that, although his salary wasn't very large it was large enough to take care of the three of us as it had always done, and that the greatest assistance I could be to the family was to assist her with the housework.

To be a teacher of domestic science was what I aspired to, but a college course was out of the question. Even if my parents had been able to strain a point and send me to an ordinary business school, they

showed me how the little I would earn the first year or two would be eaten up by fares and lunches.

The first year or two — ah, would I be working longer than that, anyway? Charles was coming to see me even then. We had a kind of understanding. Father was watching me narrowly, but he broke in, in an off-hand sort of way, by saying, "You may marry, my dear, and when my girl accepts a man's protection I want her to be able to give his home decent care in return. You better stay right home with your mother and learn all you can out in the kitchen. You will never regret it. Besides, mother is growing feeble — "

That settled it, that word "feeble." I gave up my cherished hopes, half cherished, I admit, of learning the theory of domestic arts by plunging right into practice. You just ought to taste one of my

parsley omelets, with a fluffy little biscuit "like mother used to make." I'll vouch that Charles will never taunt me with that!

Even at that stage I told Charles everything. I related all that my father had said, not about my getting married, but about the housekeeping part of it. Charles entirely agreed. Men always back each other up! Charles even went so far as to say that he would never have consented to my going to work, anyway. Imagine it! He assumed a proprietorship over me from the beginning. They all do it, these men; it's a part of their make-up. So you mustn't resent whatever Tad may have said to you, which you suggested in your postscript.

For some time, until the novelty wore off, I was quite happy learning to be a maid of all work. Mother picked up con-

siderably, while father came home every evening in so contented a frame of mind that it seemed as if the wisest thing had been done. I was supplied with neat, short-sleeved, Dutch-neck morning dresses, over which I wore chic kitchen aprons with dainty little bibs adorned with simple edging.

I went about the house, singing gaily at my work, and feeling very domestic and important. I insisted upon beginning by doing everything, which reduced mother to dusting and mending and taking life easy for the first time in her life. She demurred a little, and finally gave in with an amused sort of a smile which seemed to say "you'll get sick of it!"

Chief cook and bottle washer, yes, and ironer, and bed maker, and cleaner, was I; and, one day, when our wash-lady disappointed us and mother was out calling,

I hardened my muscles at the tubs. Mother was furious when she saw that line full of clothes, and said I should never do it again; it was too hard work; she'd put her foot right down.

"But, mother," I objected, "didn't you used to do your own washing when you were first married? You've always said you had rather a hard time to manage in those early days. You couldn't afford to hire help, could you? If it wasn't too hard for you, why should it be for me? Suppose I should marry a man who couldn't provide either a hired girl or a washerwoman, wouldn't it be just as well to know how?"

"You never shall marry such a person," she declared vehemently, and then set about showing me how to make starch that wasn't lumpy.

That night she and father agreed at the

supper table that as long as I was doing all of the work I should have some of the pay (they called it an allowance) at least, the same amount that they had formerly paid to outside help. The washing and scrubbing had cost a dollar and a half a week, and even then mother had ironed all the plain clothes and some of the fine, fussy ones. The woman was a nuisance, showing up regularly not oftener than three times a year, and only coming at all when she felt like it or needed the money especially bad. The clothes always soaked themselves clean before she arrived, and she kept mother in a constant fret of anticipation.

Father said he could give me three dollars a week, while he didn't have to pay Mrs. O'Malley, but that out of it I must buy all my clothes and keep a little for spending money. He was very generous,

at that, considering his meagre salary and the many demands upon it.

As a young girl I had never had much pin money. One hundred and fifty-six dollars a year seemed vast wealth to me. I knew at the rate I had been accustomed to that I could dress on less than half of it, and oh, it was such a glorious feeling not to have to complain every time I needed a pair of new shoes! I just went out and bought them and didn't have to worry anybody.

Mother tactfully suggested that I put away a part of each week's pay towards a new winter suit, so that when the time came I would have a lump sum. She informed me that that was the way she had always bought all of our clothes, by saving a little regularly from week to week of what father gave her to run the house. We didn't have accounts at the stores.

We couldn't afford it. We paid cash or went without. It was a wonderful example. I never had any inclination to squander my money. I knew the value of it too well.

How proud I was when I got my first bank-book! The first entry of five dollars looked mighty big to me, and I was so happy to think that I had earned it myself. I saved regularly out of my small earnings, though it seemed as if I never would get beyond the two figure mark, and I never was troubled about worrying over how the interest should be spent!

Housekeeping, cooking, sewing, all home arts came naturally to me. With mother to teach me, I made practically everything except my coats and tailored suits. Ever since I was old enough to play dust I've known how to do little things around the house. This training made

the work of our family of three very easy. We lived simply, healthfully and comfortably. I soon did it all up and had plenty of spare time.

Charles came regularly and took an interest in everything I did. He used to stay to tea, quite often, and the dear boy would smack his lips over my dainty desserts, vowing he had always hated them until he tasted mine. It was a comfort to know that as soon as he could take care of me I could take care of him.

Like all girls I wanted to take with me to my new home plenty of linen for my table and beds, and, although I never cared to have an elaborate trousseau, I wanted enough simple, well-made clothes to last me at least a year. I started a Hope Box, not a cedar one, to be sure, but a roomy pine box with a lid attached by little brass hinges and covered with gay

pink and white chintz by yours truly, upholsterer.

The little I had in the savings bank I was determined should stay there. I knew that father couldn't give me any dowry, for he was already giving me all that he could afford. Somehow the idea of being utterly penniless when I married was abhorrent, not that I doubted Charles' generosity or nice way of providing me with necessary money. I guess it's instinctive with women to hate the idea of asking their husbands for money. Suppose Charles were forgetful and I had to remind him! I wouldn't ever do it until I had to. That little nest egg in the bank should fortify me. Of course I don't really expect to have to use it in the way I've intimated, perhaps unjustly, but it will be nice to be able to buy Charles an occasional birthday or Christmas present

which won't be coming right out of his own pocket after we're married. It is a nice comfortable feeling, anyway, to know that it's there, and all mine. You'd think I was talking about a fortune, wouldn't you?

What could I do with my spare time? How could I turn it into a little extra money without interfering with my home duties? A boy could sell papers and run errands and mow lawns and shovel paths and take care of furnaces and do loads of things. What could a girl do?

Miss Joy Kent, here's what I did, and I'm some proud of myself: I organized a sewing class for the little girls of busy mothers, and taught them how to darn their stockings, make neat little patches, hem dish-towels, and right now they are working on some little flannel petticoats for themselves.

I became a baby tender, so that tired young mothers could have an occasional outing, and now the demand for bebabied couples to go to the theatre is so great that all my evenings are taken up except the two that Charles comes, Wednesdays and Sundays.

I read to old ladies and sick folks and did their shopping in the city, when they had no one else to send.

These four simple ways have supplied me with an enviable Hope Box, and have been easy and pleasant. Perhaps you will wonder how I happened to strike on them. Accidents, all of them. Mother is terribly obliging, and though she never borrows, she lends almost every day of her life to our various kindly neighbors. Our house is a sort of a neighborhood accommodation.

One day young Mrs. Billings, who lives

just around the corner, came over to borrow me. "Ever since baby came Mr. Billings and I can never go out together," she explained. "To-night my people are going to hold a family reunion, and I do want to go so dreadfully. I had planned to leave baby with the lady upstairs, but she's not feeling well. Of course I don't dare trust him with strangers. Would you mind — I would be so grateful! He'll sleep all the evening, probably, until we get home, and you'd just have to sit in the hammock or do anything you pleased."

I went, and mother sent Charles over to the Billingses' as it was Wednesday. How that baby howled! Good little thing! I finally had to send Charles home and make a business of tending to him. Then he went to sleep immediately! I promised Charles it should never happen

on his night again. Oh, Joy, I was so embarrassed!

The Billingses were very late. They tried to make me spend the night, but I wouldn't on account of breakfast. They were very grateful and acted as though I had done a heroic thing. Mr. Billings insisted upon taking me home and showed his gratitude by presenting me with a two-pound box of delicious chocolates, saying that he hesitated to offer me money, but would I accept the candy.

It wasn't a week before Mrs. Billings showed up again. This time she insisted upon paying for what she called such an obligation, and we agreed upon seventy-five cents per evening. It was easy money, for, after that first time, the baby seldom was heard from. I could read or sew or have one of the girls over. The good news spread among Mrs. Billings' married

friends and I was soon in great popularity.

The shopping trips came from an inspiration I had from old Granny Parks, one day when I was reading the Bible to her. I always read to Granny once a week, and I'm glad to do it as it's one of the poor bedridden old lady's few pleasures. She seldom buys anything new, but when she does I always get it for her. You ought to see the sweet, smiling, secretive way Granny tucks something into my hand for doing her errands, and mother told me always to take it so as not to offend the dear good soul.

Why couldn't I shop for other invalids, or people too busy to do it themselves? I dropped a few suggestions here and there among my friends, who told others, until finally I began to have to devote about one day a week to it, on the average.

Mother has to get her own lunch on those days. Then I was asked to read to a man sick with rheumatism. He pays me fifty cents for two hours, but I don't mind taking it because he has lots of money.

Where folks buy a lot of things I charge a commission, but if they want just a few fussy articles, like matching materials, I ask a reasonable amount for my time. They always pay my fares. Few complaints arise, but I do receive a great many compliments about my good taste, such as, "Why, that's exactly what I should have bought myself. It's just what I wanted." I do try to please and get what I would select for my very own self. It's a good business to work up, that is, for any girl with a knowledge of the value of money. People tell me that I can buy things, plus my commission, cheaper than they can get them for themselves.

The sewing class grew out of an expression dropped by a mother of seven, the busiest woman I know. "How thankful I shall be," she sighed, "when the necessity of teaching domestic science penetrates the numskulls on our school-board. All the cities around us have that course. I don't see why this town is so backward. If my girls could only darn their own stockings it would be such a help; but, there, I haven't time to teach them properly."

Here was my chance. I had the time. Enter my class, the following Friday after school, with three of the busy woman's little girls and four of their young friends, at twenty-five cents each, or fifteen cents where there are more than one in a family. The class has increased to fourteen now, and it's a real satisfaction to see how interested they are in their little workbags.

It is very simple. Any girl who understands plain sewing can show others how to baste and hem and overcast and back stitch and run and gather and darn neatly. She needn't be a tailor or dressmaker or anything of the kind. But all girls ought to know how to mend.

We are going to have a parents' exhibition in a couple of weeks and there will be a grand display of towels, pillow slips, aprons, flannel petticoats, artistically matched patches on difficult plaids and mathematical darns, which couldn't hurt anybody's feet.

None of this may seem feasible to you. Certainly it will not appeal as a "life work." But your life work is going to be Tad, I feel sure, and this may help fill up your Hope Box, unless it's already full. It's an easy means to an end, and one you can pick up right now there at home if you

want to, though, of course, you'd have to go to live with some one.

If one must be a neighborhood girl, conferring favors all the time, why not profit by it? People are just as grateful and feel twice as willing to call on you if they are left under no obligations. It works both ways, you know.

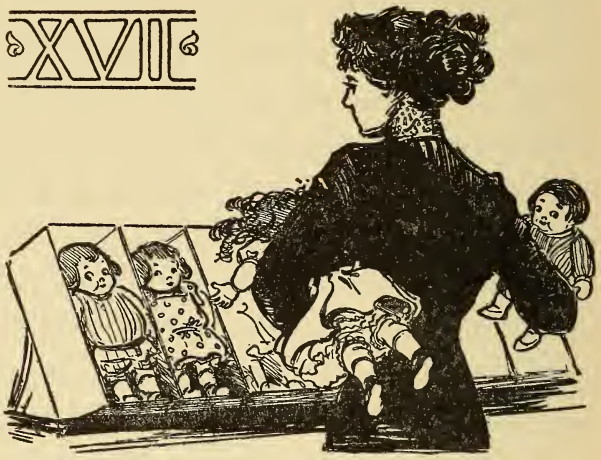
Charles would send his very kindest regards if he were here. Remember what he said about Tad. If I were you I would do exactly as Charles advised, and, somehow, under the circumstances, I don't think I should wait for any old Hope Box or trousseau.

The top of the marnin' to yez, dearie, it's already Thursday! Now I must sneak up to bed.

Yours for love and work, but not for work alone,

FELICE.

XVII



SIMPLY SALESPERSON 1195

Dear Miss with the Happy Name:

Don't be frightened. This ain't no blackhand letter.

Maisie says I hadn't oughter go butting in on you like this, 'cause tain't none of my business, and maybe she's right; but I've just got to.

"I'm going to put that poor little ascairt thing next," I says to Maisie — Maisie's my understudy in the dolls — as we was hanging on to the straps in our crowded car last night.

"How d'you know but she's one of them highbrows what considers it lowering for a girl to earn her honest living behind the counter?" growls Maisie, who was terrible grouchy for her, 'cause she had to stand up and her shoes pinched. "Maybe she don't want to get wise to no little mean jobs like us girls started on."

"She's got to begin somewhere, ain't she," I blurts out, kind of savage like, "and perhaps she ain't on to the fack that plenty of ladies, just as good as she is — anyway, it can't do no harm to show her how she's got one chanct, even if she isn't fit for anything."

"Betcher any money she don't do noth-

ing after all," mumbles Maisie, shifting her weight on to one foot and me. "You c'n take my word for it — why, if I was her I'd be picking out my troosow."

After she got off the car I sat thinking about you so hard that I clean forgot my street and got carried two blocks past. I didn't mind none, though, 'cause I was planning this letter all the way back.

You don't know who I am, and ain't likely to, for that matter, so don't pay no attention to anything I may say if you don't like it. It's just my way. If I was a millionairess I'd give away libraries with my name on a marble slab in front, and have a floating hospital day named after me, and do lots of other great fillanthropies; but slong as I'm just a poor working girl I have to get even with my conshunts by doing the little things that cross my path, like helping you.

I'm just busting with facks, and you can play they didn't come from no one but just fell straight out of the blue sky. Who is writing don't make no diffrunce. And even if you should ast my name I'd have to think some time before I could remember it. I've gone so many years as simply salesperson 1195 that I can't hardly beleve I was ever christened anything else.

Course you're wondering how I happen to be on the inside of you, so to speak, so I'll put you right to ease by stating here that I ain't a lady detective.

The car done it — the car and them two handsome friends of yourn who was talking you over pretty loud. Dead stuck on you they was, too, and each a-swapping what they was going to advise you till I couldn't stand it no longer, listening to their highferlootin' notions about the working world. It was then I seen my

duty and speiled it off to Maisie, who said I'd get no thanks for my pains. But I ain't looking for thanks, and told her so. It's my little charity, 'cause I knowed you could get along just like me and Maisie and Geraldine done.

Don't think we was evesdropping — we just couldn't help hearing. You know how tis on cars when you're tired and ain't thinking of nothing and folks will raise their voices above the rumbling to the same pitch that noosies calls out extras. First we was just curious; then awful interested. I pitied you fierce.

"Wisht I could talk to that girl they're gasing about," I whispers to Maisie. "If I only knowed who she was and where she hung out — " And just then, as if answering my very thoughts, one of them young ladies sitting under our straps, pikes up with: "No, Joy Kent doesn't

know much about the world. She's always lived in Maywood, you know." So I had you, see? — beautiful happy name, and address and all!

Dear suffering Sister, don't be ascairt of the great big world. It won't bite you. The working class that your friends said they hoped you wouldn't get in amongst, is the finest people they is, and with the biggest hearts. I'd oughter know because I've been in it ever since — well, ever since the age the law allows, and a year earlier, confidentshul between us, as I was made to lie about it to get the job, not by my parents, 'cause that was long after I didn't have any and had been put out to board with Mrs. Maloney by some relations who didn't want me round.

Oh, yes, I seen the world when I wasn't much bigger than the dolls I'm selling to-day. My name was cash then. But

I tried so hard, and never was late 'cept when the cars was blocked with snow or something, and never sneaked nothing by the time-desk, and took an interest and done my level best until my tally sheets beat all the others in my department, so that the buyer noticed I was a valuable salesperson, and I kept risen, little at a time, till now I'm going to be made a head of stock!

Maybe that ain't some jump from a cash, and in a store where they's more employees than they was folks in the whole town where I was raised in! We allus have at least three thousand help, even in dull times, counting both our mammoth buildings; and four at special sales, and Christmas — the worst time in the year — they's as many as five thousand drawing their pay outen this one firm. Ain't it 'normous!

If I'd had some genuwine education and a little more manners, natural manners, like a real lady has, you know, I'd have been a buyer by this time, I bet. Miss McGraw, she's our buyer, was only a sales for six years, and her record card couldn't hold a candle to mine either. But she had the drop on me for education, though I'm improving myself every chanct I get and you'd oughter see what a diffrunce they is in me now from what I was when I first entered the store. When I did go to the district school I was allus ascairt to death of the truant officer, 'cause I had to stay out and mind the Maloney babies more than half the time.

But, as I told Maisie to-day in the lunch-room (they is one, you know, for em-ployees where you can buy eats real cheap, or bring your own and sit down at the long empty tables for nothing), "I tell

you, Maisie," I says, "if that girl is as up and coming as her swell friends I bet she could be in a class with me, head of stock, or a buyer, or a teacher in the salesmanship school in no time, if she's got the gumps."

Maisie makes me hopping mad. "Any girl," she says, "that's got the ghost of a chanct to get married is a fool to work anywheres for anybody." That's just the trouble with Maisie. She ain't got no ambishon. Why, she's been in the dolls so long that she ain't got no more brains than's if her head was china.

"Feeonsays is all right," I answers her, "but 'twould be butting in too much to give a strange girl advice about having one, especially when you ain't never seen the gentleman, or her neither, for that matter. Us girls has to decide them things for ourselves, just as I did when

that candy-kid of a floor-walker was doing his best to shine up to me. Didn't all you girls try to sic me on him, but I wouldn't sic, would I, in spite of all your free-for-nothing hints? And him a married man, too, as it turned out! No, sir, I don't butt in on no love affairs."

Work is diffrunt. I'm right to home there, and wouldn't be afraid of tossing the lingo to the Queen of Holland if she had to come down to earning her living on her two feet behind a mess of goods.

I allus had a great pashun for dolls, probably because I never had a real one in my life until Rosabel. I broke her, at least they claimed I did, though, honest to goodness, some one knocked her outen my arms during one fierce Christmas jam. They let me have the pieces, after she was taken out of my pay, but I never could find one of her eyes, though I hunted and hunted.

I took her home and glued her up, and as long as you don't know me, and never will, I'll tell you in confidunce that I slep with that doll for more'n two years. Sometimes I lay her on my pillow, even now, old as I am, when it's dreadful lonesome and scary and I'm too tired to sleep.

Toys is a good department, though, of course, 'cepting for the holiday season, the every day sales ain't so big as in some of the other lines. But I just wanted to be among the little play dishes and teddy bears and games and dolls, so when the superintendent says to me, "What do you think you could sell?" (I had the gall, small as I was and lying about my age, to ask for a salesgirl's job) I pipes right up with: "I can sell anything, Mister, specially fish-ponds and baby dolls and harmonikurs and Noah's arks." Then

he says, "Nothing doing. You're too young." And I lied like everything, the way Mrs. Maloney told me, and begged till he put me in the toys as cash, and said real kindlike that maybe I'd be selling them next year. I did, you bet.

I s'pose all this stuff about me is drier'n turnips to you, and, anyway, you wouldn't have to start so low down as being a cash or even an inspector.

I'll tell you what you can do if you ain't too proud and want to bad enough, and goodness knows it ain't no disgrace to earn an honest living in a department store! Take 651 for a sample. She's in the cut glass. That girl has made herself invaluable to the firm. She handles all the orders for the swells. Her sales mount up to thousands of dollars a year. She told me herself that she'd been to the public library and read up all she could find about

the diffrunt patterns so's she'd know just what to select for her rich customers. She buys now, and has been down to New York for new stock two times already. A few years ago she was drawing her six dollars a week, plus one per cent. commisshun!

Then look at Miss Shaunessy — a salesperson up to last June, when she was transferred to teach in the school for salesmanship, where they say she gets more salary than those fine educated teachers in the city schools.

Did you know that lots of the biggest department stores have salesmanship classes right in their buildings and let their employees learn how to sell free of charge? Us girls used to spend a whole hour and a half out of the working day, and we weren't docked for it neither. Can you beat it?

The hardest part about being a salesperson is that you've got to smile at every customer no matter how hard it's raining outside when you've left your umbrella at home, nor how your feet is aching, nor who's sick where you live, nor how fussy and unreasonable the purchaser may be. He's the "boss" — way above even the superintendent and all the floor-walkers in Christendom. You've got to tody to the customer, first, last, and allus.

You've got to be on time and neat and polite and keep your hair tidy and your finger nails manicured and be brisk and know everything that's on your counter and keep it slicked up. You got to be courteous to every one and careful to mention the denomination of every bill they hand you.

If you buy anything in the store for yourself, outside of the first hour in the

morning which is allowed for the shopping of employees, maybe at noontime, you got to wear your street clothes and let some other salesperson do it up for you. All bundles has to be left at the time-desk. Any violation of this rule is cause for instant dismissal!

I know one girl on the corsets as lost her job because her gentleman friend brought her in a birthday present of an elegant alligator wristbag, done up in a plain white box, and she didn't call the floor superintendent at once for him to sign and send to the time-desk, but tucked it under her counter and tried to carry it out at night without bothering. But she hadn't oughter done it, though I felt awful sorry for her.

Then there's fines for making out bundle tickets wrong, and not deducting credits from sales. A girl has to watch

pretty careful, but if she tends to business there ain't no need of fines.

But you'll get all this in the printed rules you has to learn off by heart. They're dreadful strict, but I guess they has to be considering all us thousands of employees.

You'll meet most every kind of a girl they is working in a big city department store. A good many live at home and have all they earn to put on their backs. Piles are like me and have to entirely support theirselves on what they get. You've probably noticed some salesladies who rig up in duds that's classy enough to put the swell customers themselves to shame. I never could see how a girl could earn a dollar or a dollar and a quarter a day and wear fifteen-dollar ostrich plumes on her sporty lid that she wears for common to work in, as some do. I allus feels bad in-

side when I see a cheap little salesperson swaggering round with diamond rings like a ristocrat, while she demonstrates a new dime gellatine in the grocery annex or nineteen-cent hose! There's something wrong somewhere and I think it's a shame!

Course I don't blame any girl for wanting pretty things. I do myself, but I'd rather 'conomize and wear my little faded ribbons and bare hands without any rings than to lose my self-respect. A girl can get along and be decent on what she earns if she has a little sense about spending her money. But she can't have things like rich folks. She's got to pretend she ain't interested in fine clothes, and stop longing to wear the fluffy-ruffled silk petticoats she sells, and put her mind on to making herself worth more so the firm'll increase her salary. If she has any kind of a home

she can do it easy. It's a jigsaw puzzle for us that ain't!

They is stores, right in this city, as is awful mean to their help. I pity the girls. But it ain't so bad as it used to be, Miss Gugenheim says, and she was working before I was born. She's seen the time when they want no such law as they is now regulating the number of hours a girl should work. And she says they's going to be a "minernum wage," which won't allow no store to pay its help less than a certain sum. Won't that be grand if they make it as high as our store, and fierce if they put it down to what Maisie got where she worked first! But it's coming. Miss Gugenheim says she heard Mr. Brock, he hires us girls, and another man talking it over.

If you go after a job, pick out the biggest department stores with the best repu-

tations, 'cause, honest, the way employees is treated does leak out. I'd never think of applying at Nixon & Jenkins, for instance. Every one knows they're mean. Take a reliable store, maybe sometime when they's an advertisement in the newspapers for "salespersons wanted." There usually is.

Notice how many that applies when you do gets turned away. You can tell by their faces when they come out of the Super's office. I seen hundreds, and just because they show right off they'd be "loafers" and never do nothing but lounge on the counter and gossip. You got to make a good bluff to Mr. Brock and not gawk like an idiot and say "I dunno" to everything.

Show him you've got the spice and the ambish and need the job and want to get ahead and ain't taking it just as a make-

shift and don't feel too good to be doing it. Tell him you want a chanct, and you'll work up yourself, and you'll get it.

Ability is what they're looking for, and you can just take it from me you've got to have some of it to keep your job behind the counter. Faithful service isn't in it with push. Look at poor Miss Gugenheim, as I was just telling you of. Her hair was gold, she says, when she come here; now it's snow white, and her getting just the same! She never expects any more, and she probably ain't worth it to the firm. She's steady and keeps her job, along with hundreds of other faithful fossils that never had it in them to get ahead any but just stay on years and years till they ain't any good. Some stores would discharge them for young help, but my firm is awful fair.

It's the salesbooks that shows up what's

in you. Naturally a girl selling pins and needles and small wares can't total up what a girl in the suit or jewelry department can, but she can make her sales average just a little more than any other person on the same counter. The minute she does that she's a valuable salesperson.

The gloves would be a dandy department for you to begin on, or, maybe china. You might get as high as eight dollars to start, or less with a small per cent. commisshun, depending upon your line. Your record will be carefully watched for one year, and if you go above the average of your department, as I was saying, your buyer will spot you and you'll be advanced without striking for more pay yourself. That's the way they do business here, anyway.

I never wrote such a long letter before in all my life. It beats a sermon, don't it?

I done it all by myself 'cept I ast the little stenog across the hall to sprinkle in the punkchuashun and correck the spelling.

If you'll please excuse me now I think I'll go to bed, 'cause I have to get up at six (I get my own breakfasts in my room). Besides Rosabel looks kind of sleepy out of her good eye.

Do you know, I often wish Rosabel was real when I see her lying there on the pillow beside me. It's fierce not having any one to love when you get home tired at night.

Can't I say this to you, just as one girl who knows how it feels to be down and out to another, that I wisht with all my heart you might never know nothing in life but what your mother named you when you was a little baby? That's what she meant when she called you "Joy" I'm sure. But then you'd have to keep out of

a department store, cept maybe to buy your wedding clothes and things for the flat.

Excuse me for butting in. Maisie said I hadn't oughter, and perhaps she's right. Anyway, I send this along because I got to, hoping it may do some good.

You'd better think twict, my little protéshay, before you give up that beautiful happy name of yourn for just a convict number like

Yours truly,

SALESPERSON 1195.

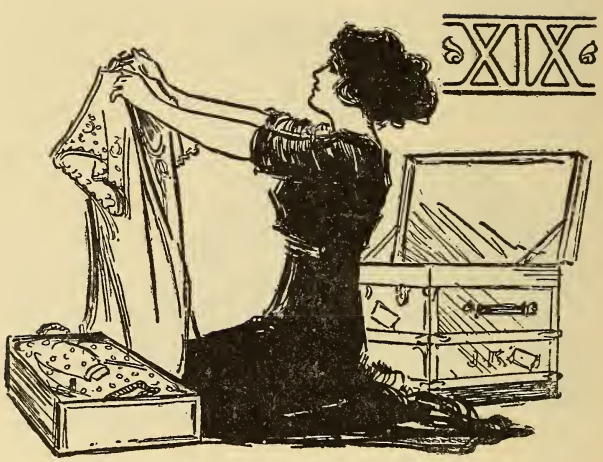
A NIGHT LETTER

To Miss Joy Kent, *Jan. 6.*
25 Linden Road,
Maywood, Mass.

Firm has ordered me to go West. Leave to-morrow at 8.30 P. M. For the last time, will you go with me? Wire office.

Tad.

XIX



JOY FINDS HER PLACE IN THE WONDERFUL WORLD

Daybreak, Jan. 7th.

DEAREST GIRL:

I'm side-tracked and wildly excited!

We leave for Seattle to-night. Tad says he has had the license in his pocket for a week!

You and the other girls, to each of whom I'm sending a copy of this letter, responded in splendid fashion, and I thank you with all my heart for your part in helping me make up my mind about what I should do. Somehow the beaten path looks more inviting than the trackless way you self-made wonders have dared to traverse.

After all, I am following your advice, the first advice I ever took in my life!

Congratulate me and pray for Tad.

Gratefully ever,

JOY KENT.

P. S. I can't bear to think of your working so hard out there in that dreadful world. Can't you scare up a nice young man like Tad? I have discovered my place, and am so happy I want you to be,

too. Take my heartfelt advice and follow the girl who, but a week ago, was crying to you, "Oh, what shall I do?" and has now found out.

JOY.

THE END.

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Author of "Miss Billy," "Miss Billy's Decision," etc.

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When Joy Kent finds herself alone in the world, thrown on her own resources, after the death of her father, she looks about her, as do so many young girls, fresh from the public schools, wondering how she can support herself and earn a place in the great business world about her. Still wondering, she sends a letter to a number of girls she had known in school days, asking that each one tell her just how she had equipped herself for a salary-earning career, and once equipped, how she had found it possible to start on that career. In reply come letters from the milliner, the stenographer, the librarian, the salesgirl, the newspaper woman, the teacher, the nurse, and from girls who had adopted all sorts of vocations as a means of livelihood. Real riendly girl letters they are, too, not of the type that preach, but of the kind which give sound and helpful advice in a bright and interesting manner. Of course there is a splendid young man who also gives advice. Any "What-shall-I-do" young girl can read of the careers suggested for Joy Kent with profit and pleasure, and, perhaps, with surprise!

THE HARBOR MASTER

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Author of "Comrades of the Trails," "Rayton: A Backwoods Mystery," etc.

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